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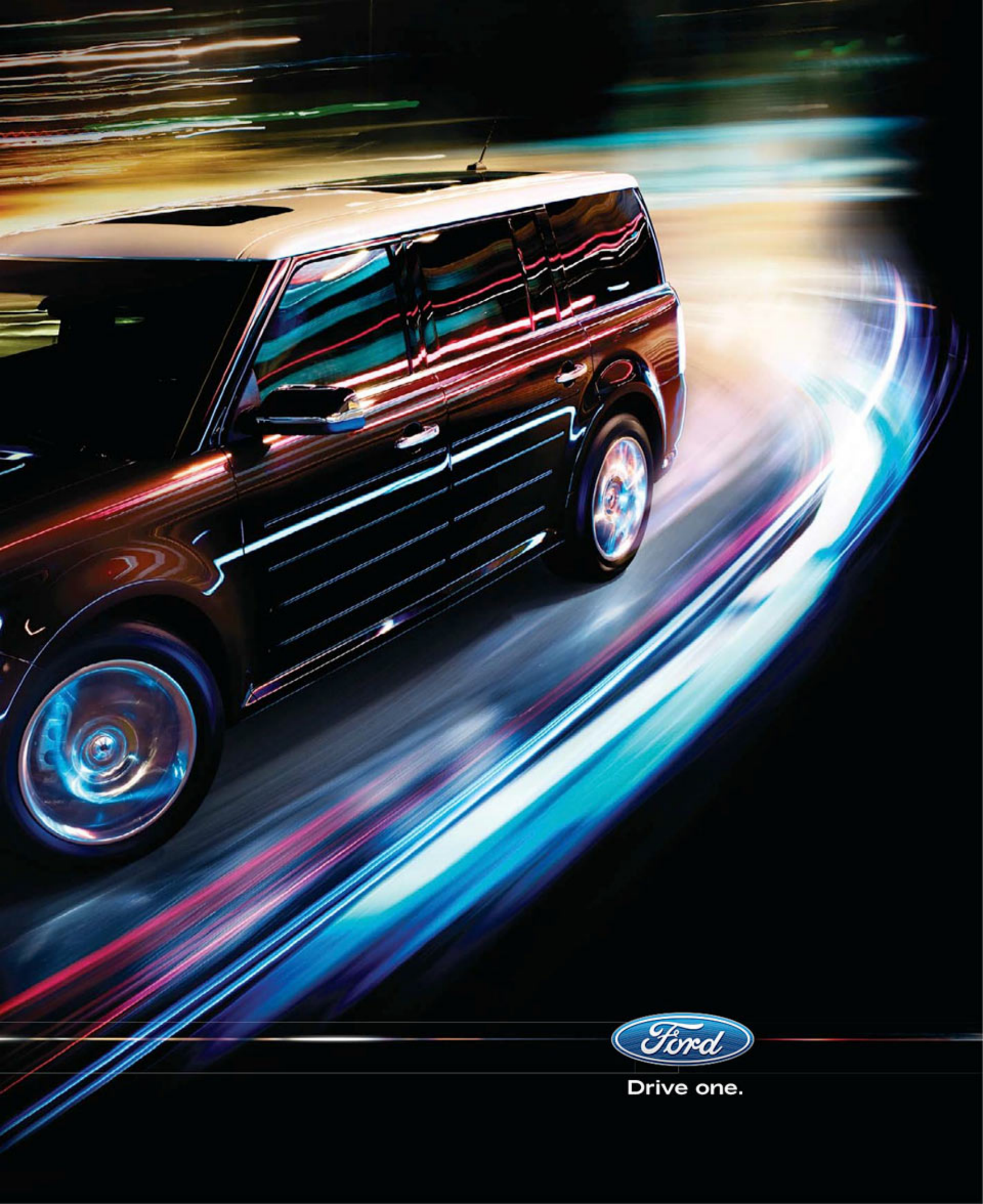
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SAVEUR

THE SAVEUR 100

HOME COOK EDITION

We love to cook because we love to eat, and we know that nothing tastes better than meals prepared by our own hands in our own kitchens. That's why we've devoted this year's SAVEUR 100 to home cooks all over the world. Starting on page 30, you'll find an inspiring and expansive collection of recipes, tips, techniques, cookware, markets, ingredients, innovations, profiles, and more—in all, a hundred excellent reasons to get busy in the kitchen.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

COVER *Chicken breasts stuffed with raclette, herbs, and prosciutto.* PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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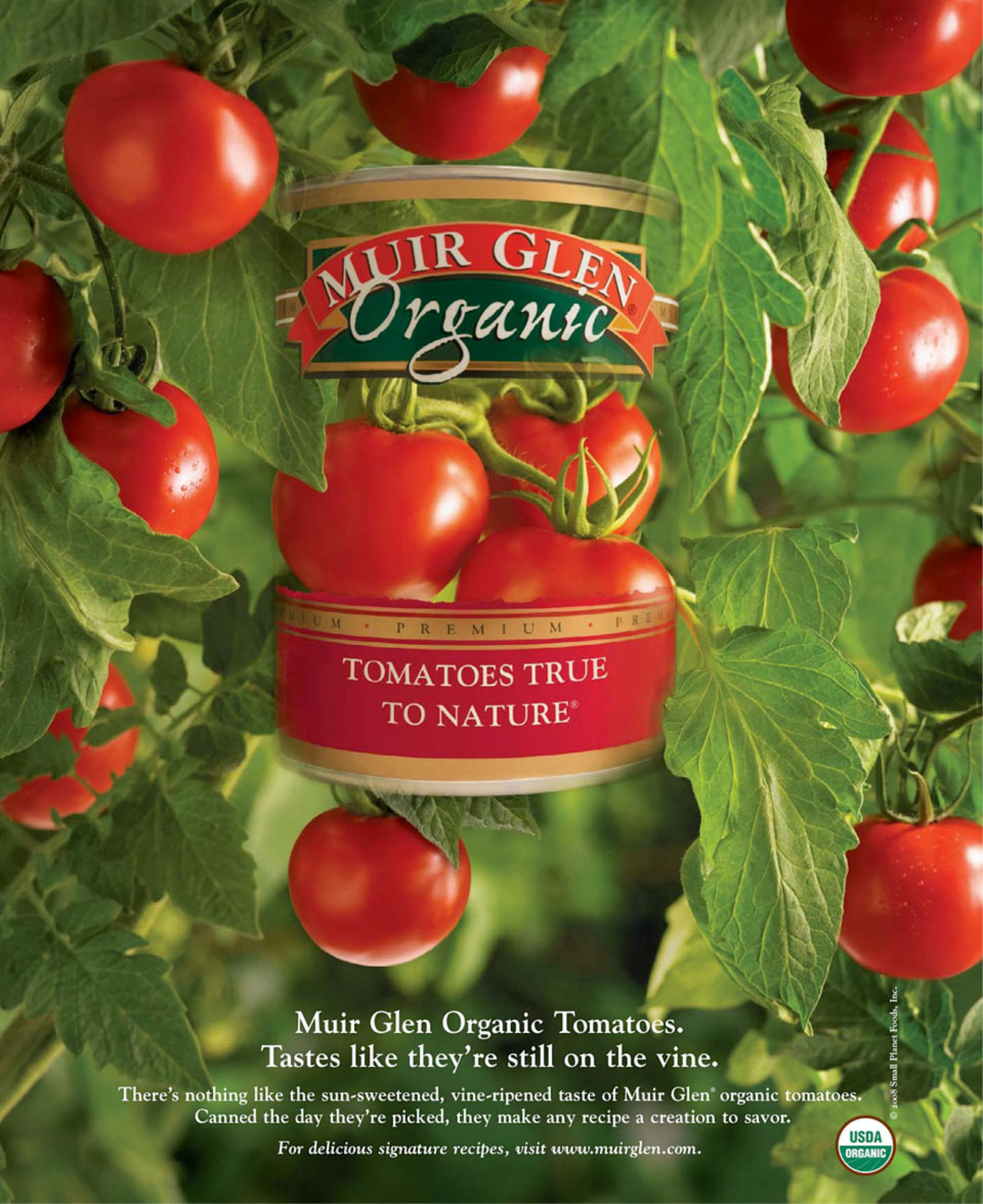
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This month at SAVEUR.COM you'll find a guide to the best bar food in Louisville, Kentucky; a Polish vodka primer; hearty recipes for braised lamb shanks and steak pizzaiola; a conversation with Nach Waxman of Kitchen Arts & Letters, New York's premier culinary bookstore; a menu of sophisticated New Year's Eve sips; tips for preparing the perfect roast chicken; and many other exclusive online features.

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FIRST

All the Way Home

In our own kitchens, we are what we cook

I AM STARING AT THE contents of my refrigerator, deciding what to make for dinner. There isn't much to work with—among the standouts are some late-season collard greens and a shiny whole mackerel that I picked up at the farmers' market. I'm debating whether to pan-fry the mackerel or to try a more ambitious preparation, maybe with lemongrass and coconut milk. As for the collard greens, I think I'll make them the way my partner, Daniel, who is from Brazil, recently taught me: I'll shred them and briefly sauté them in olive oil with sliced garlic. What an epiphany it is to eat still-crisp collard greens!

There are few things I enjoy more than cooking in my own kitchen. I love getting my hands on raw ingredients and transforming them into something new and surprising and delicious. When my kitchen fills with the aroma of briny mussels steaming open in white wine, or when I toast whole spices and grind them with chiles to make my own spice paste, I feel a satisfying sense of connection to what I am about to eat.

The interior of the author's refrigerator.

JAMES OSELAND

Don't get me wrong—I love dining out. I get a thrill from sitting down to dinner in a bustling restaurant, knowing I'm about to taste a chef's inspired creations. But home cooking is something else entirely; it nourishes us, and our friends and family, on a far more intimate and profound level. When we stand before that open refrigerator, we summon up memories and recipes and tips and aspirations we've acquired from everyone we've ever cooked with and everywhere we've ever been.

The way we cook is always evolving, changing to fit our schedules, our finances, our households, our whims. Sure, there have been times when we've strayed from the stove: in a culture that's both fast paced and food enlightened, it's easy to grab great meals on the go, and sometimes we find ourselves questioning whether we have the time or the skill to cook the way we really want to. But, the fact is, there's something grounding and reassuring about even the simplest meals we prepare in our kitchens. It's not for nothing that they call it "the heart of the home".

That, in essence, is what this year's special edition of the annual SAVEUR 100, which starts on page 30, is all about. Every one of the hundred items has been chosen with the home cook in mind. We've covered the globe, from Singapore to Santa Monica, to find the most enduring recipes, the best cookware and cookbooks, the most inspirational supermarkets, and the most flavorful pantry staples. And we've paid visits to unsung kitchen heroes who expanded our notion of what home cooking can be: a Trinidadian émigrée who works wonders with little more than some curry powder and a can of chickpeas, a fire chief in California who has mastered the art of feeding a crowd, and others. Each of them reminds me of a basic truth that drives everything we do at SAVEUR: that cooking is one of the most fundamental, and beautiful, expressions of who we are. —*JAMES OSELAND, Editor-in-Chief*

THE SAVEUR 100 FOODIE GIVEAWAY!

log on to win

IN HONOR OF THE SAVEUR 100, we're clearing out our pantries for you! Every Tuesday and Friday from January 6 to February 27, 2009, log on to **www.saveur.com/100contest** and click on that day's prize for a chance to win fabulous items for your kitchen.

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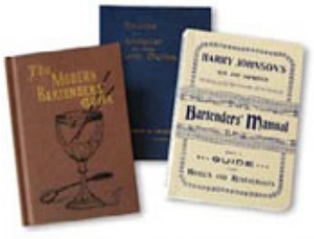

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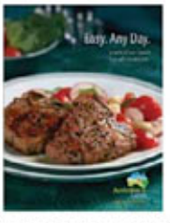

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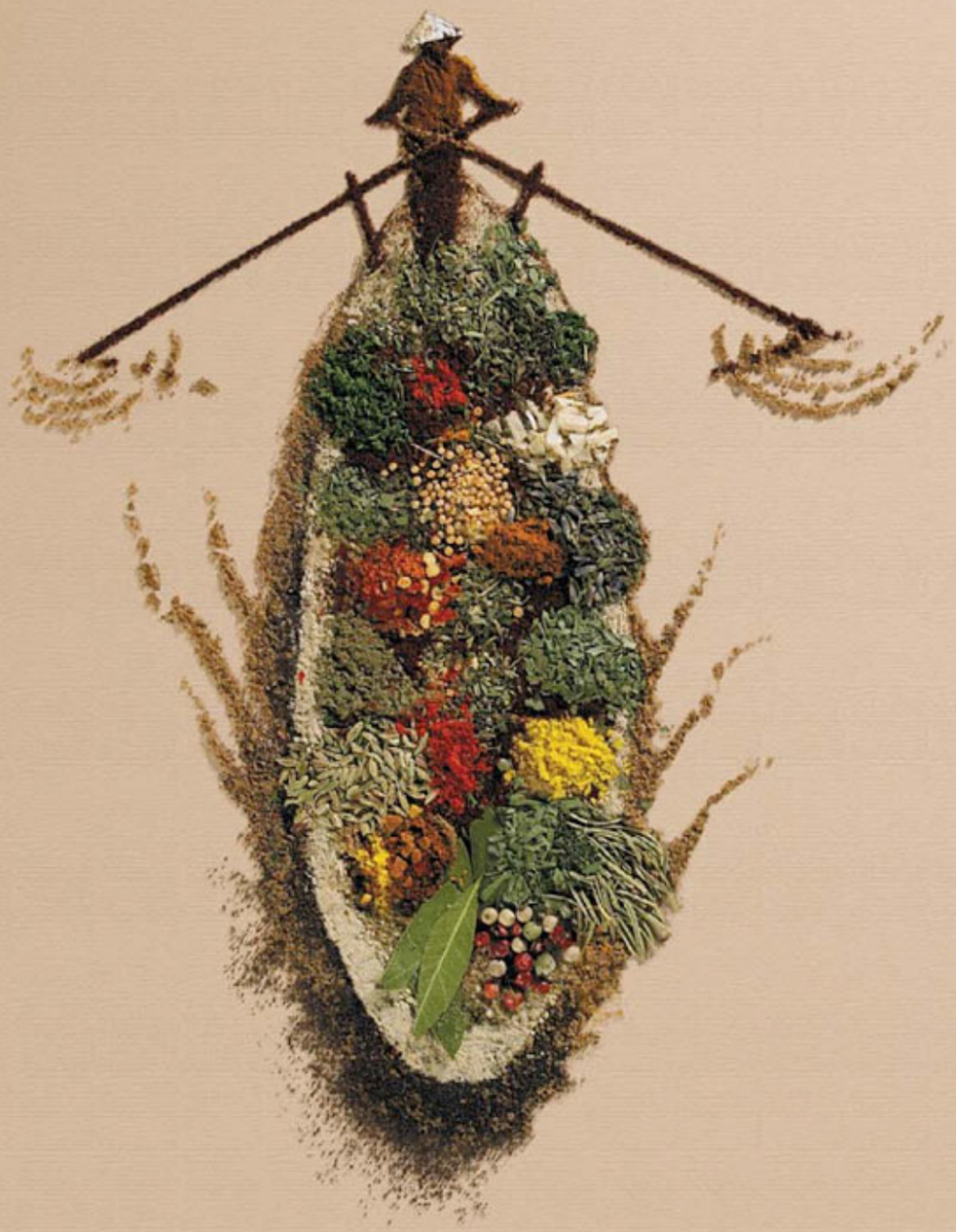

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FARE

Discoveries and Dispatches from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More

The Real Thing

IT WAS HARDLY THE stuff that dreams are made of: processed cheese on packaged whole wheat bread. But for the five-year-old me, consuming it was a momentous experience. Of course, I didn't know then that the sandwich I was eating was made with "cheese product". I would have to grow up before I discovered what a truly great grilled cheese sandwich tastes like.

That epiphany came recently, in fact, after a visit to the Jura Mountains, along the French-Swiss border. There I was seduced by comté, France's largest-selling Controlled Appellation of Origin (AOC) cheese. As with any new crush, I learned all I could: that semifirm comté is born of the distinctive milk of the region's Montbéliarde cows, whose diet includes wild orchids, daisies, dandelions, and more than 400 other plant varieties; that it's produced in the *fruitières*, or cooperative dairies, that have dotted the landscape of the Franche-Comté region for centuries; that the Montbéliardes' milk is partly skimmed and heated gently in copper-lined

Cheese *affineur* Michel Tyrode tending to wheels of comté in Pontarlier, France.

OWEN FRANKEN/CORBIS

vats before being combined with rennet; that the resulting curds are broken into fine grains, put into molds for pressing, and set on spruce boards for a few weeks of aging before being entrusted to an *affineur*, who oversees the further maturing of the cheese.

In one *fruitière*, Maison Marcel Petite Fort St-Antoine, a converted barracks in Pontarlier, France, that has been refurbished as an aging cellar, I stood awestruck before thousands upon thousands of pale yellow wheels of comté. Inside each of them, the earthy, funky, yeasty, effervescing process of fermentation was at work. It is in such cellars that comté develops hints of chocolate, nutmeg, apricot, tobacco, hazelnut, pepper, and caramel. The emphasis in the making of comté is not on uniformity, as with some AOC cheeses, but on individuality. A young cheese may smell like butter, an older one like fruit and spices. But, no matter the age, comté is a celebrated melting cheese, used in France for everything from fondues to soufflés and potato gratins.

After returning from France to New York City, where I live, I bought a wedge of aged comté—in fact, a product that had been finished at the very same Fort St-Antoine cellars I'd visited—and carried it home. On my counter lay a loaf of fresh sourdough bread. It was time to make grilled cheese—grown-up grilled cheese, *real* grilled cheese. I dropped a dollop of butter into my skillet, sliced the bread and the comté, and cooked it, watching as the cheese melted and released a delightfully grassy, nutty aroma.

One bite was all it took; I knew I'd achieved perfection. Like even the humblest grilled cheese sandwich, this one, in its transcendent simplicity, amounted to much more than the sum of its parts. —*Cara de Silva*

RECIPE

The Ultimate Grilled Cheese Sandwich

SERVES 2

The secret to making a perfect grilled cheese sandwich (above) is cooking it over low heat, which brings out the subtle flavors of a cheese, and slathering the bread with butter, which crisps it in the pan. Comté, with its semifirm texture and nutty taste, is great for grilling. For a source for comté, see page 89.

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 4 ½"-thick slices sourdough bread
- 1 8-oz. piece comté cheese, grated

1. Spread butter evenly on both sides of each slice of bread. Put half the cheese on one slice and half on another. Top each with remaining bread slices. Heat a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat.

2. Add sandwiches to skillet and cook, flipping once with a metal spatula, until golden brown and crusty on both sides, 18–20 minutes. Transfer sandwiches to a cutting board and slice in half with a knife. Serve warm.

AGENDA

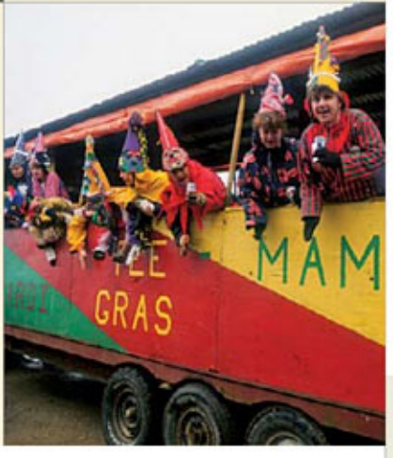
JANUARY
7
Anniversary:
BOSTON COOKING-SCHOOL COOK BOOK PUBLISHED
Boston, Massachusetts, 1896
This classic of American cooking, also known as the *Fannie Farmer Cookbook* (after the author, a Boston cooking teacher), standardized measurements for the teaspoon, tablespoon, and cup, among other achievements. To date, the book has sold more than 4 million copies, and it has never gone out of print.

JANUARY
8–10
BIG BEERS, BELGIANS & BARLEY-WINES FESTIVAL
Vail, Colorado
More than 175 beers will be available for tasting at this festival—from dark, malty, sweet, and very strong barley wines to the typically lighter spiced Belgian ales—as well as brewmasters' dinners, seminars on beer making for both laymen and experts, and a home brew competition. Information: www.bigbeersfestival.com.

JANUARY
22
Birthday:
GRAHAM KERR
London, England, 1934
Graham Kerr was to cooking shows what Roger Moore was to Bond films: a melding of sex appeal and scripted corniness. On his late-1960s Canadian television program, *The Galloping Gourmet*, Kerr (pictured, right, in 1972) became famous for preparing—in his signature rollicking style—unabashedly rich dishes that relied on loads of butter and wine.

JANUARY
31
Exhibition starts:
OVER SPILT MILK: THE FIGHT FOR FAIR PRICE AND FAIR PROFIT IN DEPRESSION-ERA NEW YORK
Brooklyn, New York
In 1937, decades before celebrities sported milk mustaches, activists founded the country's first milk cooperative to ensure fair prices for milk. Through historical documents and photos, this show looks back at the early dairy industry. Information: www.nyfoodmuse.org.

FEBRUARY
24
22ND TEE MAMOU-IOTA MARDI GRAS FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL
Iota, Louisiana
Far from the flying beads of New Orleans's Mardi Gras celebrations, this town's annual festival honors the "runners" of the towns Tee Mamou and Iota, who once raced through the countryside capturing chickens for gumbo on Fat Tuesday. Sample fried alligator and frogs' legs, pralines, and bread pudding. Information: www.iotamardigras.com.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; CHRIS WARE/GETTY IMAGES; JOHN CHIASSON/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY THE PARODNECK FOUNDATION

It's pondering dinner.

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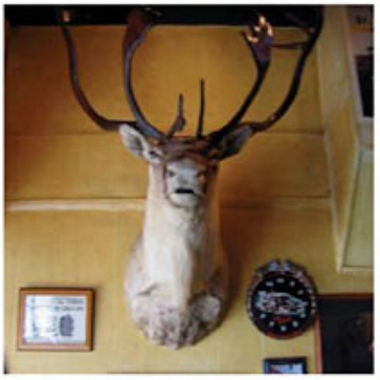

RECIPE

Fried Chicken Livers

SERVES 2

These crisp and delicious bar snacks (pictured, bottom right), are stellar accompaniments to an ice-cold beer.

- Canola oil, for frying
- 1 lb. chicken livers, trimmed
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 cups self-rising flour
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- 2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
- Hot sauce, for dipping

1. Pour oil into a 4-qt. saucepan to reach a depth of 2"; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 340°. Soak livers in buttermilk for 5 minutes. Combine flour, salt, pepper, and poultry seasoning in a small baking dish. Drain livers; dredge each liver in flour mixture, shaking off excess flour; transfer to a plate.

2. Fry livers in batches until golden brown, 3–4 minutes. (Cover pan with a splatter screen to keep oil from splattering.) Transfer livers to a paper towel-lined plate. Serve with hot sauce.

DINNER AND DRINKS

When I was growing up, my family made regular trips to Louisville, Kentucky, for two reasons: visiting my grandmother and eating fried chicken livers. Grandma was what's known in those parts as a firecracker; she loved a good manhattan and a lively debate, and she would take us around to local neighborhood joints that served up both, along with an array of bar snacks, including the crunchiest fried chicken livers I've ever tasted. So, it seemed appropriate that my father and I should pay homage to his mother's memory on a recent return to Louisville with a tour of some of the city's most venerable tippling establishments.

Louisville is a drinking town. A social town. The local bourbon industry is one factor; the julep-fueled Kentucky Derby season is another. This is the home of the old-fashioned, that glorious concoction of bourbon, bitters, and orange, and of majestic hotels, like the Seelbach and the Brown, both of which boast grand old bars. But one cannot live on booze alone, and so Louisville's bars have become great places to eat; they're where the genial tavern culture of the Midwest meets the fried-food mother lode of the South. The union constitutes one of the country's best bar-snacking traditions, of which livers are just the beginning.

Some of the bar snacks we sampled are unique to Louisville. Take the rolled oyster, a fist-size cluster of mollusks cloaked in cracker meal and deep-fried; the specialty was invented in the 1880s by the tavern owner Phillip Mazzoni and is served to this day in bars throughout the city. In the late 1970s, the Bristol Bar & Grille began providing its own incentive for ordering another round: green chile wontons, fried parcels filled with jalapeño-spiked melted cheese and served with a cooling guacamole dip. Then there's the hot Brown, an open-face turkey-and-bacon sandwich smothered in mornay sauce. It was created in 1923 as a late-night snack for guests at the Brown Hotel, and the best place to order one is still the bar in the hotel's elegant lobby.

"There's a real loyalty to place," says Amy Evans, an oral historian with the Southern Foodways Alliance, who visited Louisville last

Clockwise from top left: the hot Brown sandwich at the Brown Hotel; a caribou head at Flabby's; white bean soup at Check's Café; the author's father, Fred Kracklauer, with the fried chicken livers at Flabby's; the shredded lamb and pork sandwich at Morris' Deli; the exterior of Flabby's.

CLOCKWISE, FROM BOTTOM LEFT, COURTESY THE BROWN HOTEL; BETH KRACKLAUER (5)

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year to research its vibrant bar scene. "Folks there tend to be monogamous with their drinking." My father and I realized almost immediately how true that is. In the historically German neighborhood of Schnitzelburg, which is home to many of the city's oldest bars, we stopped in at Flabby's, a cozy, 57-year-old tavern where the bartender knew every patron but us. The crunchy fried chicken livers, piled high in a plastic basket, were amazing. So was the smoky white bean soup around the corner at Check's Café, where we also tried a sandwich of fried, thick-cut baloney and a Bluegrass Brewing Co. bourbon-barrel stout. And in the nearby Highlands neighborhood, at the friendly half liquor store, half grocery called Morris' Deli, we made a detour into the walk-in beer cooler before settling at the counter for a succulent shredded lamb and pork sandwich.

A recipe for rolled oysters at SAVEUR.COM/LOUISVILLE

Dad and I were gratified to discover that some of Louisville's most acclaimed chefs are upholding the city's bar snack traditions. At Lilly's Bistro, Kathy Cary featured an entire menu of "Kentucky Tapas". At Jack's Lounge, Dean Corbett's fried calamari with caponata complemented bartender Joy Perrine's infused-bourbon cocktails. We even sampled house-made bison bresaola from the bar menu at Michael Paley's Proof on Main. Truth be told, were Grandma here today, she might raise an eyebrow at the practice of serving such exotic offerings as bagna cauda at the bar. But after a few bites (and a cocktail, of course), I think she'd recognize their fresh flavors as her kind of food. —*Beth Kracklauer*

No Ordinary Pig

In Budapest, where I live, the butcher shops brim with stacks of smoked bacon, cured hams, and paprika-spiked dried sausages. These cured meats have always been delicious, but in recent years they've gotten even better, thanks in no small part to the return of a particularly fat and flavorful breed of hog called Mangalica.

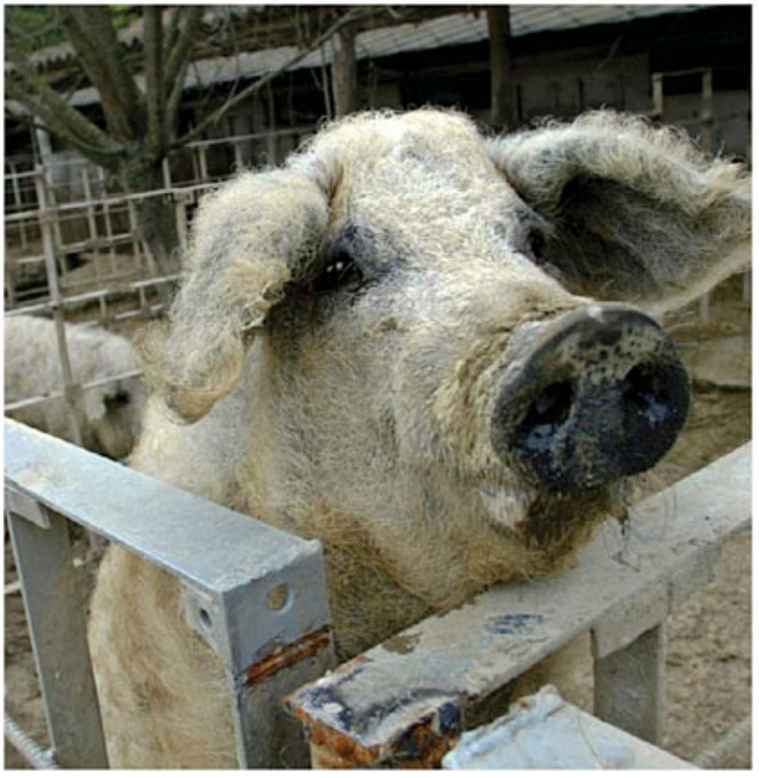
Mangalicas (or Mangalitsas, as they are sometimes known in the United States) are curly-bristled pigs with red and richly marbled flesh that doesn't at all resemble, in look or taste, other kinds of pork. Once the preferred breed among home cooks and butchers in Hungary, the Mangalica is what's known as a "fat-type hog" (the name comes from the Serbo-Croatian term for fatty pig) because of the large, white layer of fat that insulates its stout frame. The breed nearly disappeared in the 1950s when Communist-era pig farmers turned to leaner hogs that produced larger litters. In 1991 there were just 200 Mangalicas left, but a few dedicated farmers started raising them for specialty markets, and populations have bounced back to the tune of some 50,000 last year.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Where the perfect grilled cheese sandwich is / the successful party is also.

—*"The Grilled Cheese Sandwich: An Elusive Essential to Social Success" by Christine Scanlon, poet*

Because of its high fat content, Mangalica pork makes some of the world's most flavorful sausage and salami. The fat allows hams to cure longer, deepening flavor without sacrificing moisture; all that fat also acts as a vehicle for other flavors, like smoke and seasonings. On a recent trip to Vienna (where Mangalica is enjoying a comeback), I tasted Mangalica lardo (also sold there as speck), made from fatback seasoned with rosemary, thyme, dried coriander, and other spices; it had a creamy texture and intense flavor that surpassed those of any other lardo I've tasted. The Mangalica's marbling also makes it ideal for roasting or braising, and fresh cuts like chops and tenderloins are increasingly available in Hungary alongside the cured stuff.



A Hungarian Mangalica hog in Kapoly, in western Hungary, above.

In the United States, where a renaissance of old pork breeds like Ossabaw, Tamworth, and Gloucestershire Old Spot is in full swing, pork lovers are starting to get a taste of Mangalica at farmers' markets and restaurants. Wooly Pigs, a company in central Washington, has 100 Mangalica sows, which owner Heath Putnam brought over from Austria as piglets; it now produces 1,000 pigs annually. Putnam is selling his breeding stock to farmers in California and New Jersey, who have already begun selling to restaurants on the West Coast. The premier Mangalica producer in Hungary, a joint Spanish–Hungarian company named Olmos and Tóth, also has plans to import dry-cured jamón made in Spain with the hog's fatty haunches. Some restaurants, like the French Laundry, in Yountville, California, have already started serving Mangalica, and Keith Luce, chef at The Herbfarm in Seattle, is raising his own. If things keep up like this for the breed, Mangalica is bound to become the next big pig. —*Carolyn Bánfalvi*

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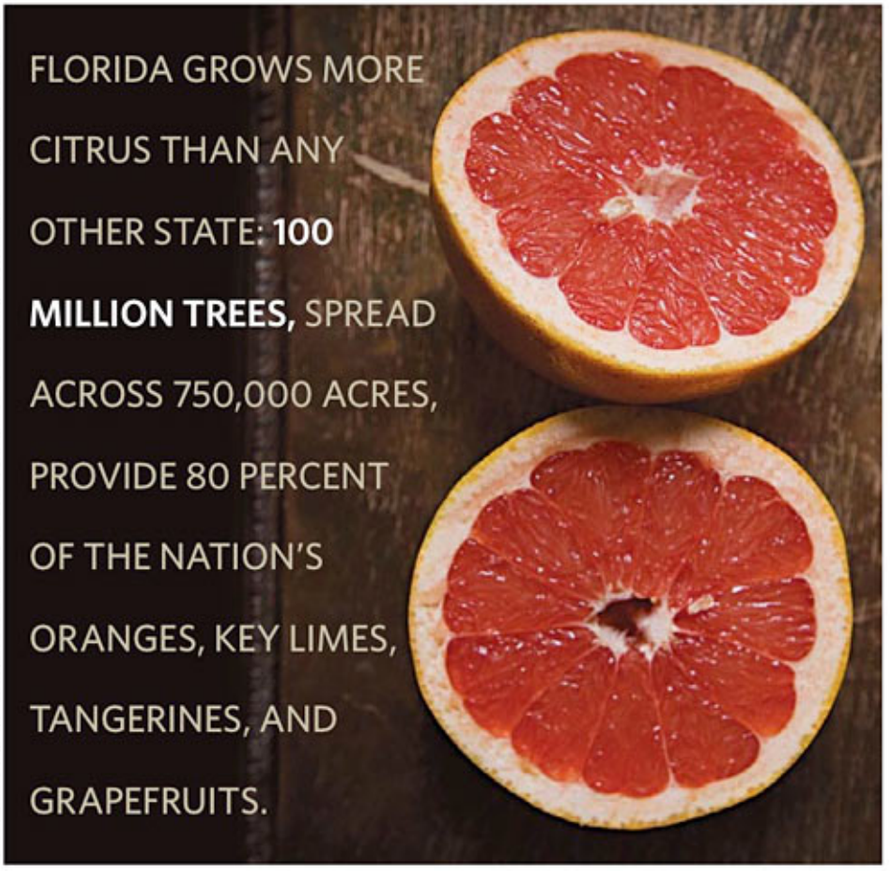
STATE PLATES: FLORIDA

Surf and Turf

Most tourists flock to Florida for the beaches. We go for the food: a year-round bounty of luscious citrus from the state's countless groves, seafood from its more than 8,000 miles of shoreline, and regional favorites like frogs' legs and hearts of palm from the Everglades. What's more, the state's cities are home to an astounding melting pot: 75 percent of Miami residents speak a language other than English as their mother tongue. That means that you can roam the globe without leaving the balmy climes of the Sunshine State. —*Victoria Pesce Elliott*

LOCAL HERO

The author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote poetically about the natural surroundings of her home on a 72-acre orange grove in the rural scrublands of northern Florida. After the success of her 1942 novel *Cross Creek*, she came out with *Cross Creek Cookery*, a delightful, opinionated treatise on the cuisine of Florida Crackers—rural descendants of the state's early European settlers. Rawlings's book includes recipes for dishes made from the varied wildlife in her backyard, like blackbird pie, coot surprise, pot roast of bear, alligator-tail steak, and boiled mullet.



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W *Nine Florida food finds at* SAVEUR.COM/STATEPLATESFL

Each spring, bees swarm along river basins in the Florida panhandle, feasting on the blossoms of tupelo gum trees. The result? Uniquely sweet and musky **tupelo honey**.

LATEST AND GREATEST

The group of like-minded south Florida chefs dubbed the Mango Gang—**Norman Van Aken** (pictured, right), **Allen Susser**, and **Douglas Rodriguez**—are well known to Floridian foodies, but creative up-and-comers like **Michael Schwartz** of Michael's Genuine Food & Drink, in Miami, whose straightforward cooking emphasizes local ingredients, are gaining renown. Among other gastronomic points of interest across the state are the **Ravenous Pig**, an excellent gastropub near Orlando; chef Jeanie Roland's Asian-inspired **Perfect Caper**, in Punta Gorda; and a host of restaurants, stretching from Disney World to Palm Beach, overseen by notables like Daniel Boulud, Emeril Lagasse, and Nobu Matsuhisa.

THE PANTRY, *page 89: Information on comté, Louisville, Mangalicas, and Florida.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS; LARRY NIGHSWANDER; REDMOND DURRELL/ALAMY; COURTESY NORMAN VAN AKEN; BETTMANN/CORBIS; ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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INGREDIENT

Better Than Butter

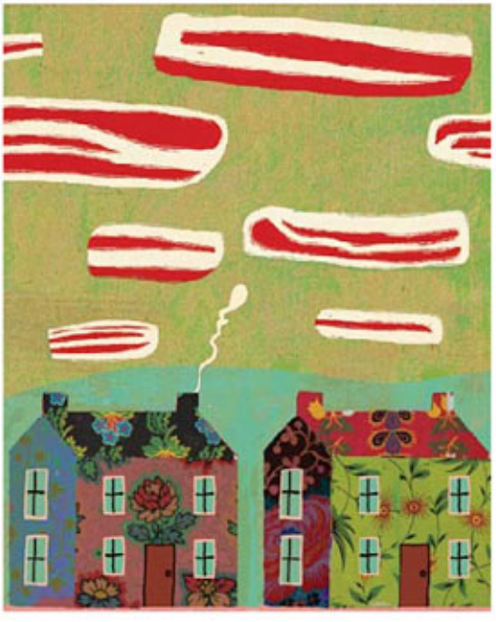
Bacon fat is a flavorful, versatile cook's companion

BY SHANE MITCHELL

WHILE RUMMAGING around my brother Jamie's kitchen in Rhode Island recently, I opened the cabinet doors below his sink and let out a loud hoot. There, amid the usual clutter of dish soaps and cleaning implements, was a coffee can filled with solidified bacon fat. This is a man, mind you, with a penchant for $30 bottles of olive oil and fancy European butters, a professional chef who caters to wealthy clients. The can signaled that we were definitely cut from the same cloth: I have a mason jar full of bacon grease tucked into my refrigerator door that I top off every time I fry bacon. Cooking with these "drippings" is a habit my brother and I picked up from our paternal grandmother, who was raised in South Carolina and kept her precious supply in a cast-iron skillet atop the stove, at the ready for slathering over corn bread or sautéing sliced apples.

Cooks have probably cherished unrefined animal fats ever since man first learned to roast meat on a spit and catch the drippings in a pan. And, thanks in part to Hernando de Soto, the 16th-century Spanish explorer who introduced swine to the geographic region now called the American South, my Lowcountry ancestors developed a particular fondness for cooking with the flavorful leavings of cured pork. It's no wonder: when heated, bacon—particularly American bacon, which is blessedly fattier than its European and Canadian counterparts—leaves behind a caramel-colored liquid that keeps well for months (as long as it's stored in a cool, dark place) and imbues whatever it touches with a whiff of sweetness and smoke.

Not that the cookbooks making up the early Southern canon, such as Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife* (1824), sang the praises of bacon grease. Back then, the ingredient was strictly for poor folks and pioneers, while the genteel preferred butter or leaf lard, the pristine white fat that surrounds a hog's kidneys. In 1847, *The Carolina Housewife* was likely the first book to encourage cooking with bacon grease, though its author, Sarah Rutledge, referred to the ingredient euphemistically, as "bacon-liquor". For a postbellum working class that couldn't spare precious butter for frying its eggs, grease ultimately won out over grace.



By the time of the Great Depression, when my grandmother was cooking for three sons on a reduced budget, fewer people than ever could afford to turn up their noses at bacon grease. Not long ago, when I queried an uncle of mine about Nana's frugal cooking methods, he broke into a wide grin as he recalled her delicious gravy for grits, made with sliced onions sautéed in bacon grease, flour, and milk. My uncle's recollection wasn't too different from that of the Virginia restaurateur Michael DiGrassie, who told me that his mother, the late Mildred Rowe, poured bacon grease gravy "on top of everything". Mrs. Rowe's namesake restaurant and bakery, just off Interstate 81 in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, has been a favorite pit stop for Southern cooking since she opened the establishment's doors, in 1947. "It was her oil of choice," DiGrassie said. "She kept it in a bowl on the back of the stove and would spoon it into the pan to cook pork chops, country ham, cube steaks." Although he now uses soy oil at Mrs. Rowe's, DiGrassie admits to relying on more-flavorful drippings at home.

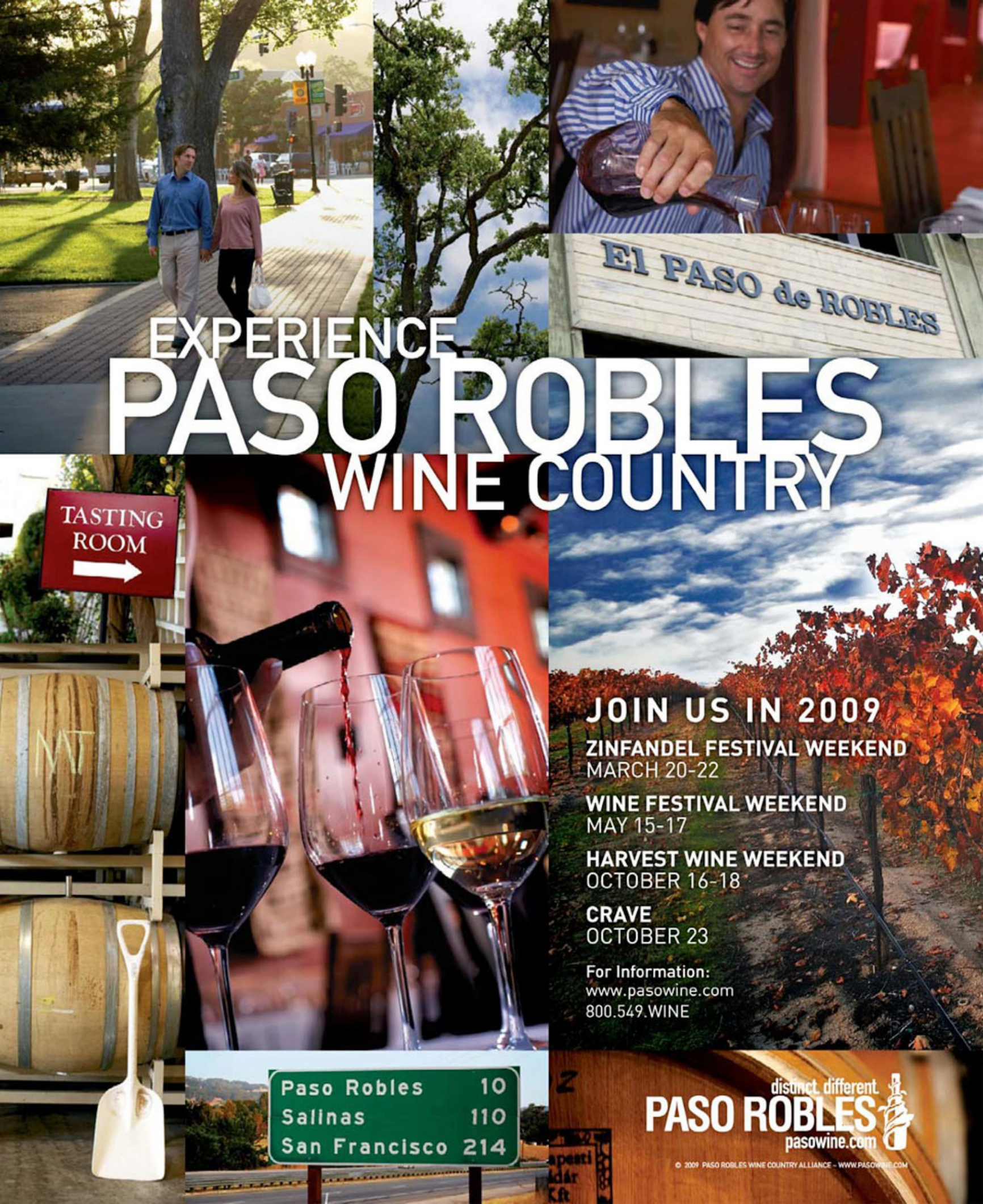
Nowadays, Southerners of every social and economic station (as well as plenty of pork-loving Yankees like me) use bacon grease as an all-purpose cooking medium. Hush puppies fried in it are crisper; greens sautéed in it are tastier; and dishes like maque choux, a succotash-like Cajun-style side dish, can't be made without it. While big-brand bacon renders perfectly serviceable grease, artisanal varieties offer fat with the lingering essence of, variously, molasses, maple syrup, and black pepper.

After finding my brother's grease can, I had to wonder how our family's bacon fat habit augured for our health. I crunched some nutritional data and learned that one ounce of bacon grease actually contains less saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium than the same quantity of salted butter. (Okay, so it has more calories.) What's more, margarine from hydrogenated corn oil has five times more sodium than bacon fat does, and even olive oil, canola oil, and safflower oil pack practically the same caloric wallop as bacon grease.

And, though this may be purely anecdotal evidence, my well-greased grandmother, who never modernized her culinary techniques and moreover slugged back two fingers of bourbon every day, lived to be 94. I'm hoping I've inherited her genes, along with her skillet.

SHANE MITCHELL, *a* SAVEUR *contributing editor, lives in Remsen, New York.*

ILLUSTRATION: BEPPE GIACOBBE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LIVES

One-Man Show

In his day, Lucius Beebe was America's preeminent gourmand

BY DAVID PLOTNIKOFF

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED the puzzle that was Lucius Beebe when I was a teenager, paging through old *Life* magazines in the public library of my hometown, Redwood City, California. On the cover of one issue from 1939 was the likeness of a man who appeared to be a 19th-century robber baron. From his top hat to his massive gold watch chain and deerskin gloves, he was every inch as ornate and magnificent as an opera house chandelier. Was he a movie actor in some kind of period costume, or perhaps a European royal? As it turned out, he was neither. Lucius Beebe, a newspaper columnist by trade, was on the cover of *Life* essentially for being Lucius Beebe.

It wasn't until many years later, after I had become a newspaper columnist myself, that I became interested in the substance of the man behind those bespoke suits. Though he is now largely forgotten, from the 1930s through the 1960s Beebe was one of the most influential tastemakers in America and a one-man media franchise: celebrated gastronome, prolific author, ranking mandarin of New York society, unapologetic snob, world-class barfly, and one of the nation's most passionate railroad buffs.

Last year, when I heard that Beebe's fabled private railcar, the *Virginia City*, was parked on a siding at the Port of Redwood City, being used for private chartering, I felt compelled to return to the city's library, once again determined to decode the enigma of Lucius Beebe. Surprised to discover that there wasn't a single definitive biography of the neglected giant, I turned to his columns for the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Gourmet* magazine. I was fascinated by the blow-by-blow accounts of Falstaffian-scale meals with multiple wine courses, exotic game, flaming desserts, and hundred-year-old brandies. Never mind that the typical Beebe dictum (e.g., "The driest, coldest champagne is the only acceptable drink to accompany hard-boiled plover's eggs") was of no practical use to most of his readers. Decades before gonzo journalism had a name, Beebe was all that and a side of mutton.

LUCIUS MORRIS BEEBE, born in 1902 into an old-line New England mercantile family, was blessed with sufficient wealth and self-regard that he could project himself as a larger-than-life figure, even as a teenager. At Yale, he became widely known for both his practical jokes and the fully stocked speakeasy in his dorm room. He was hard to overlook, strolling into morning classes in the evening attire and carrying the gold-headed cane left over from the night before.

Beebe was hired as a cub reporter at the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1929. Standing six foot four in his silk stockings, he was fond of reporting the news of the day in full formal dress, including a mink-lined topcoat. Within five years, he found his métier as a syndicated columnist chronicling the intrigues and excesses of café society. With his popular column "This New York", Beebe became the de facto historian and referee for the social set, which he documented in a weekly sachet of purple-prose trivialities. While there were some verifiable truths in the frothy mix, they may not always have constituted the first ingredient. Stanley Walker, his first editor at the *Herald Tribune*, recalled that Beebe possessed "an apathy about facts which verged closely on actual dislike". In one of his columns, he set out to trace the hazy origins of crêpes suzette. He described a chef who "ran me up a fine dish of Crêpes à l'Orange awash with approximately a pint of Hennessy Three Star although the hour was 11 in the morning". He went on, "I went back to my desk, radiant with the wonder of it all and only having fallen down once getting into the taxi."

The bon ton lasted until 1944, when "This New York" was canceled. Undeterred, Beebe moved the party to *Gourmet* two years later, where his "Along the Boulevards" column allowed him even more opportunities for culinary conquest and contemplation. After a good reign, in 1950 Beebe, having tired of Manhattan society, left the city and, in effect, checked out of the 20th century altogether. Along with Charles Clegg, his life partner and literary collaborator, Beebe set out for Virginia City, Nevada, a former silver-mining town with a population of 400 or so.

My learning of Beebe's Western exodus led me to the California State Railroad Museum, in Sacramento, where many of the author's manuscripts from that era reside. As I read through his correspondence, it intrigued me that Beebe, the quintessential urban sophisticate, was utterly at home in the middle of nowhere. Reinventing himself overnight, he traded his bowler and Saville Row suits for a black Stetson, a bolo tie, and snakeskin boots. As the 1960s mutated into The Sixties, however, Beebe's weekly column for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "This Wild West", became a pulpit from which he railed against a contemporary culture that he found cheap, vulgar, and increasingly unrecognizable. The grand boulevardier looked around and saw the end of the boulevard. One February evening in 1966, at his winter mansion in Hillsborough, California, Beebe took his ritual Turkish bath, went to bed, and suffered a heart attack. And so, the last Edwardian gentleman slipped from the tarnished present into the golden past.

A FEW MONTHS INTO my research, as I pored over his stories of glorious excess, I started to wonder what kept me coming back

DAVID PLOTNIKOFF *is a former media columnist for the* San Jose Mercury News.

Lucius Beebe in the Garden Court of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, 1960.

SLIM AARONS/GETTY IMAGES

to Beebe. As a newspaper writer, I suppose, I found his unabashed lack of restraint to be liberating. His body of work was a broad-stroke study in black and white. While other writers might offer opinions, Beebe issued imperial pronouncements; the item in question was either excellent or execrable—period.

Though he rose to fame in an era when food writing was limited largely to recipe books and the occasional dispatch from literary journalists like A. J. Liebling and Joseph Mitchell, Beebe prefigured today's blog-driven, restaurant-fixated culinary culture by promoting the then revolutionary view that food was not only worth writing about but worth obsessing over. The cookbook author James Villas, in a *Gourmet* article about Beebe from 1998, said of him, "He not only flaunted a new epicureanism, with reverberations far into the future, but...he successfully exploited 'political correctness' some 40 years before the first smug moralist even thought of the...notion." I decided to call Villas for some fresh perspective on where Beebe should fit in the arc of culinary history. He kept me riveted on the phone for more than hour. There was the story about the time when Beebe wined and dined Villas at Le Pavillon, the great New York temple of haute cuisine, or the one about meeting Beebe's 185-pound Saint Bernard, Mr. T-Bone. "If anybody ever symbolized individualism," Villas told me toward the end of our conversation, "it's Lucius Beebe. He always said, 'If anything is worth doing, it is worth doing in style.'"

Lucius Beebe, in His Own Words

ON AGING: "High blood pressure, cheeriness at breakfast, a mellowing political philosophy and an inability to drink more than half a bottle of proof spirits at cocktail time without falling over the fire irons all suggest dark wings hovering overhead and the impending midnight croak of the raven."

ON STEAK: "One of the minor problems of dining in New Orleans is to keep the chef from getting his hands on the meat and...trying to cook it. When ordering steak it is well-advised to instruct the waiter to walk briskly through the kitchen holding it within a few feet of the stove."

ON POLYNESIAN RESTAURANTS: "The food is fabricated from fish heads and boiled newspapers and listed on the bill of fare under names that make Oriental visitors snicker."

ON FOOD CRITICS: "With one or two exceptions there are no two of New York's restaurant writers who can pass the mutual time of day without the possibility of a stabbing."

ON HAVING BEEN A NEW YORK SOCIETY COLUMNIST: "I considered my function that of a connoisseur of the preposterous.... I did have a fabulous time. I did drink more champagne and get to more dinner parties and general jollification than I would have in almost any other profession."

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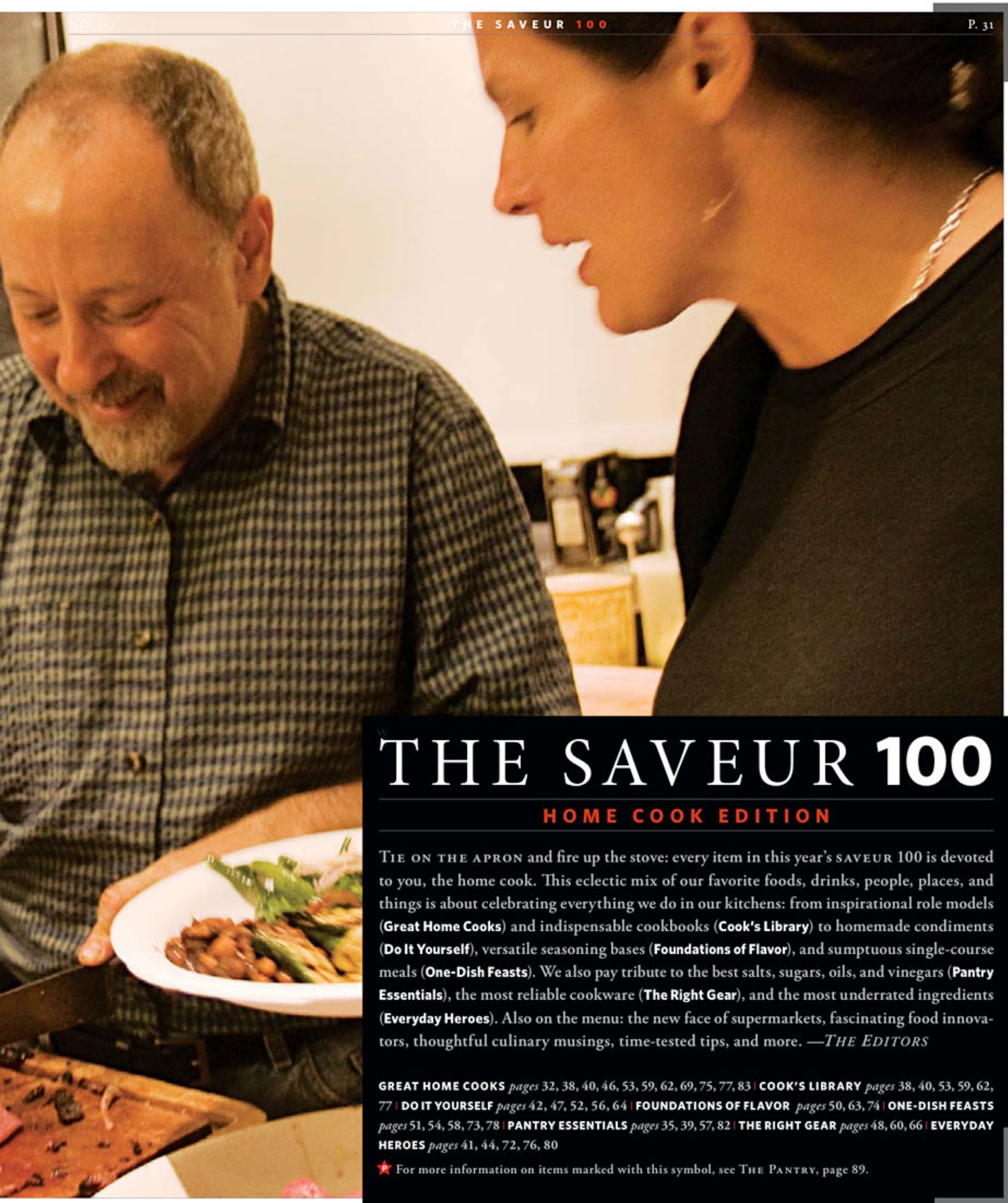
DAVE LIEBERMAN

Frank Gruber (with carving knife) serves a feast of roast elk in his Santa Monica, California, home. (For more, see page 53.)



THE SAVEUR 100

HOME COOK EDITION

TIE ON THE APRON and fire up the stove: every item in this year's SAVEUR 100 is devoted to you, the home cook. This eclectic mix of our favorite foods, drinks, people, places, and things is about celebrating everything we do in our kitchens: from inspirational role models (**Great Home Cooks**) and indispensable cookbooks (**Cook's Library**) to homemade condiments (**Do It Yourself**), versatile seasoning bases (**Foundations of Flavor**), and sumptuous single-course meals (**One-Dish Feasts**). We also pay tribute to the best salts, sugars, oils, and vinegars (**Pantry Essentials**), the most reliable cookware (**The Right Gear**), and the most underrated ingredients (**Everyday Heroes**). Also on the menu: the new face of supermarkets, fascinating food innovators, thoughtful culinary musings, time-tested tips, and more. —*THE EDITORS*

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GREAT HOME COOKS

1

COOKING FROM THE HEART

Real home cooking is like fine art: it is hard to define, but we know it when we see it. It may announce its presence in the form of yeasty, garlicky, lemony, peppery aromas wafting from a big, old kitchen stove or merely by the sounds of chopping and slicing. It might be coming from a farmhouse in Tuscany, an apartment in Marrakech, or a seaside cottage on the coast of Maine. But no matter where it's happening, it is the most personal and satisfying style of cooking we know.

Home cooking stresses finesse over fancy techniques. It calls for ingredients close at hand, like the fresh and dried chiles that Mexican home cooks swear by or the salt-cured anchovies that southern Italians can't do without. Simplicity is a hallmark of home cooking, and so is adaptability: if a dish calls for six cloves of garlic and you have only one, if the recipe requires a tablespoon of tomato paste and you're all out, if you're supposed to use lemon juice but you've got only oranges, you cook anyway, and you end up making something good.

I've known some extraordinary home cooks over the years, and I've learned from them all, but the one I admire the most is my 43-year-old daughter, **SARA JENKINS**. In New York City, where she lives, she makes her living as a restaurant chef, but Sara has always resisted that title, insisting that what she does is "just home cooking". This doesn't surprise me. Sara spent her childhood in Madrid, Beirut, Cyprus, Rome, and the Tuscan countryside, all places where home-style food is considered the apex of culinary culture, places where the dishes people make in their own kitchens profoundly influence what's on restaurant menus, rather than the other way around.

Watching Sara in her apartment kitchen as she smears a chicken with butter and fresh herbs before popping it into the oven or mashes a garlic clove on the cutting board with salt and olive oil, I'm reminded of all the times I've done the same things, made the same simple, almost unconscious gestures. And watching her year-and-a-half-old son, Nadir (right), as he stands wide-eyed in anticipation, waiting for that chicken to emerge from the oven, I remember a similar look on the faces of Sara and her brother, Nico. In the end, that's what home cooking is: a link, a continuum from one generation to the next, a flow of knowledge and love that strengthens and nourishes everyone it touches. The fact is, there's nowhere in the world I'd rather eat than at Sara's kitchen table. —*Nancy Harmon Jenkins, author of* The New Mediterranean Diet Cookbook *(Bantam, 2009)*

LANDON NORDEMAN

Sara's Roast Chicken with Sage and Garlic (SERVES 4) *Based on a recipe in* Olives and Oranges *by Sara Jenkins and Mindy Fox (Houghton Mifflin, 2008).*

- 1 4-lb. chicken
- 1 lemon
- 22 fresh sage leaves
- 3 cloves garlic
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- Kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 8 sprigs parsley
- 2 small onions, quartered
- 2 carrots, cut into 2" pieces
- Fleur de sel

① Heat oven to 475°. Rinse chicken under cold water; pat dry with paper towels. Peel lemon, avoiding white pith. Finely chop lemon peel, sage, and garlic together; place in a bowl. Add butter and 1 tsp. salt. Stir to combine. Quarter the peeled lemon; set aside.

② Using your fingers and a small, sharp knife, loosen skin of chicken from breasts and thighs. Slip butter mixture between skin and flesh, spreading it evenly. Rub skin with oil; season skin and cavity with salt and pepper to taste. Stuff with quartered lemon, parsley, and 1 quartered onion. Tie legs together with kitchen twine, if you like.

③ Put remaining quartered onion and carrots into center of roasting pan and place chicken on top of them. Roast for 20 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 400°. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh (without touching bone) reads 165°, about 1 hour more. Transfer chicken to a platter; sprinkle with fleur de sel; let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

2

Bringing Us to the Table

When we turn on our television to find **LIDIA BASTIANICH** preparing dinner in her home kitchen, we can't wait to cook what she's cooking. Maybe it's the relaxed way the 61-year-old host of *Lidia's Italy*, among other series, tells us to trim an artichoke or prepare a ragù that makes us want to try it for ourselves, to experience the joy of cooking that she radiates on-screen. "Food is a gift," says Bastianich, and over the five decades since her family left Istria, in northern Italy, she has been more than generous with it. Starting in 1971 with a 38-seat restaurant in Queens, New York, she has expanded her reach, overseeing a multifaceted empire that includes her television shows, cookbooks, restaurants, Italian vineyards, and other culinary businesses, which she runs with her children. We're in awe of how consistently Bastianich has remained true to what she feels is the most important: the pleasures of the table and their ability to bring people together. "I want everyone to know they can cook," she says. "It's an innate part of being human."

FROM LEFT: LANDON NORDEMAN; BETH ROONEY

3

GARDEN CITIES

The distance from farm to table in American cities is getting shorter. In parks, in vacant lots, and even on the grounds of abandoned factories, **URBAN GARDENS AND FARMS** are growing better food than their commercial counterparts and bringing fresh produce to lower-income neighborhoods where markets are often scarce. In Milwaukee, for instance, an organization called Growing Power, established in 1993 by the former pro basketball player Will Allen (below), created a two-acre urban farm whose organic produce is as popular with the community as it is with the city's chefs. (Allen was awarded a MacArthur "genius grant" for his efforts in 2008.) In Detroit, the Garden Resource Program Collaborative has turned vacant lots into over 100 gardens, where local residents grow spinach, garlic, and more. Farms are also popping up in cities where cheap real estate is scarce. In Brooklyn, New York, the Red Hook Community Farm supplies a Community Supported Agriculture club from its three acres, and in Boston, the Food Project has encouraged

officials to incorporate food gardens into community development plans. The dividend for these urban communities? Better access to fresh food, and a sure path to delicious meals. *—Tracie McMillan, a Brooklyn-based journalist*

PANTRY ESSENTIALS

SUGAR

Along with salt, vinegar, and oil, sugar is one of the most elemental ingredients in the kitchen. And when it comes to the variety of sugars available to home cooks today, sweet is just the beginning. Along the spectrum from flavorful raw sugar to refined white exists a dramatic range of tastes and textures, each suited to different kinds of baking and cooking. The five cane sugars shown here are five we wouldn't want to do without.

4 A great choice for sprinkling atop baked goods, **INDIA TREE SPARKLING SUGAR** comes in a variety of colors and adds a crackly texture to cookies, cupcakes, and dipped candies.

5 **BILLINGTON'S DARK BROWN MOLASSES SUGAR** is, hands down, our favorite brown sugar. This unrefined muscovado sugar (sugar from which molasses is not removed) adds an intense, earthy flavor to gingerbread, chocolate brownies, and even barbecue sauces.

6 The Mexican cousin of Indian jaggery, **GOYA PILONCILLO** comes in caramel-colored cones, made from boiled-down cane juice. The sugar has a maple sugar taste that lends complex sweetness to dessert sauces and unifies the flavors in smoky sauces like mole negro.

7 Unlike refined white sugars, which are stripped of all molasses, **FLORIDA CRYSTALS NATURAL CANE SUGAR** is made directly from filtered cane syrup—a process that leaves a touch of color and molasses flavor on the crystal. This is our everyday sugar; we add it to everything from coffee to corn flakes.

8 A mainstay in the arsenal of professional bakers and experienced home cooks alike, finely ground **C&H BAKER'S SUGAR** has a clean cane flavor; its powdery grains dissolve easily in custards and meringues and help give a delicate texture to cookies and cakes.

MICHAEL KRAUS

LE CREUSET
LE CREUSET

9

Grandes Dames

We're obsessed with Le Creuset's enameled cast-iron pots, from the old wood-handled skillet we bought at a yard sale years ago to the shiny new gratin dish we splurged on last winter. But the ones that we brag about—and use—the most are our round and oval **LE CREUSET FRENCH OVENS**. We love everything about these French-made heavy-lidded pots: how they feel as we carry them to the stove, so heavy and capable; how their cooking surfaces help brown meats beautifully and then release the flavorful charred bits with a splash of wine. That they're easy on the eye doesn't hurt, either: sometimes just looking at these beauties makes us want to cook.

Granted, much of what we admire about these cookpots owes to the characteristics of the material from which they're made—enameled cast iron—and to the pots' shape, which is essentially that of a dutch oven. (Le Creuset calls its versions French ovens for the American market and *cocottes* in France.) Cast iron retains heat as no other material does and distributes it evenly, and the tight-fitting lid of dutch ovens traps moisture, making the pots ideal for succulent, slow-cooked dishes. We use our Le Creuset French ovens for everything from simmering soups to braising short ribs to making ragù. We've even baked bread in them. They've become our all-purpose pots—which is exactly how they are used in France. "French home cooks don't have a dozen different pots," says the famed chef and restaurateur Laurent Tourondel, who grew up in central France. "You get a Le Creuset *cocotte* when you get married and you have it for life."

We've often wondered whether our preference for Le Creuset's French ovens over other brands is backed by empirical evidence. Does the company employ a special type of enamel? A unique recipe for cast iron? As it turns out, the pots are still made by hand the same way they have been since the firm's founders, a Belgian enameler named Octave Aubecq and a Belgian casting specialist named Armand Desaegher, started producing the pots in the northern French town of Fresnoy-le-Grand, in 1925. For making a pot, two sand molds are cast to fit together and molten iron is poured in; when the iron is cool and hard, the molds are cracked away, the pots are sanded, and three coats of enamel are applied. After sanding the pot, workers apply three coats of enamel—a clear base coat (which constitutes the surface of Le Creuset's nonstick skillets) and two top coats. In the 1950s, some of the pots were made in a 16th-century foundry in Cousances (these rare editions stamped "Cousances" fetch the highest prices on eBay). Nowadays, they are made in Fresnoy-le-Grand, and all Le Creuset's designers, engineers, and craftsmen work there; of the 3,000 people who live in the town, 600 derive their livelihoods from the company.

For the first part of the 20th century, Le Creuset was little known outside France—a situation that changed only in the mid-1950s as the popularity of French cooking spread. In 1969, Elizabeth David wrote a slim cookbook that was a love letter to the brand. In the introduction to *Cooking with Le Creuset* (Clarbat), David describes the thrill of discovering the pretty pots in Marseille and hauling a few back to her apartment in London. Her description sums up the experience of using them: "Everything I cooked seemed to turn out right," she wrote.

HOME SCHOOLING

We admit that we're forever inviting ourselves into the kitchens of people that we meet when we travel. That's why our favorite trend in culinary tourism is that of seasoned cooks' teaching cooking classes in the comfort of their own homes. Some of the best-known **HOME COOKING CLASSES** are given by established cookbook authors like Elizabeth Andoh, author of *At Home with Japanese Cooking* (Knopf, 1980) among other books, who teaches intimate classes at her homes in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan; and Faith Willinger, who wrote *Red, White, and Greens: The Italian Way with Vegetables* (HarperCollins, 1996) and runs classes in the kitchen of her 17th-century house in Florence, Italy. But the majority of the teachers are celebrities of a more local variety: people like Agata Amato, who offers courses on the cooking of the Amalfi coast at the estate in Ravello, Italy, where her family has lived and farmed for more than 250 years; and Nimmy Paul, a cook in the city of Kochi, in India's Kerala State, who introduces travelers to regional dishes like appam, the rice-flour pancakes commonly eaten for breakfast, and fish curry with coconut milk. Or, you can make a detour to the village of Sungai Penchala, in Malaysia, where Rohani Jelani lives. Jelani presides over a sunny, open kitchen where she teaches visitors how to use ingredients from her garden like lemongrass and torch ginger flower (a woodsy-tasting aromatic) to make local specialties like nasi kerabu, an herbal rice salad. The best part of all these classes? They usually double as lunch or dinner.

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ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

COOK'S LIBRARY

There are dozens of Italian cookbooks on our shelves, but there are none we use as faithfully as Marcella Hazan's **THE CLASSIC ITALIAN COOK BOOK** (Harper's Magazine Press, 1973). With this book, the Italian-born culinary teacher gave American

cooks their first comprehensive and authentic Italian culinary compendium; all these years later, it is still our undisputed favorite source for everything from making risotto to understanding Italian techniques for cooking vegetables (like *trifolare*, which calls for thinly slicing and sautéing ingredients in olive oil and garlic). Her recipes are lucidly written and reliable: the fresh pasta we make has always been her version. You can find the recipes from the original book in Hazan's updated volume, *Essential Classic Italian Cooking* (Knopf, 1992). Our only beef with it is that the publisher omitted the Italian names of most dishes. Still, it contains all the brilliance of Hazan's first book, the gold standard for Italian home cooking. —*Nach Waxman, owner of the Kitchen Arts & Letters bookstore in New York City*

FROM LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS; LANDON NORDEMAN

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GREAT HOME COOKS

TASTES LIKE HOME

"What I make, and what my daughter makes, my mother made before us," says **EULINE JOSEPH**, a 59-year-old native of Trinidad and Tobago who has lived in Brooklyn, New York, for the past five years. It would be hard to express the essence of home cooking more succinctly than that. And yet, one thing that impresses us about Joseph's cooking is not her rigid adherence to tradition but rather her easy adaptability in the kitchen. For instance, she tosses canned chickpeas, as opposed to the dried kind, which her mother used to slow-cook over an open fire, into the pot along with store-bought curry powder for her version of chana (pictured above), a spicy Trinidadian main course. Is her cooking compromised by such North American–style shortcuts? Not a chance. As we tuck into the chana, which Joseph serves with homemade floats, puffy fried flatbreads she whipped up earlier this morning, we're convinced that her mother would be mighty proud indeed.

A recipe for chana at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

PANTRY ESSENTIALS

OIL

A home kitchen doesn't need dozens of oils; just a few diverse, high-quality ones like those pictured here. Each of these oils comes from a different part of the world and has a bold, distinctive taste that evokes the fruit, nut, seed, or vegetable that the oil is made from.

(13) Depending on where and how they're made, extra-virgin olive oils vary so widely that it makes sense to stock a few. For a variety of cooked dishes, we rely on subtly fruity **NUÑEZ DE PRADO EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**, from the Baena district of Andalusia, in southern Spain.

(14) Our favorite olive oil for drizzling over salads or even just toasted bread is **FRANKIES 457 EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**, from Sicily, which has the green hue and ripe, grassy flavors prized in oils from that island.

(15) Milled in California by a 150-year-old French company, **LA TOURANGELLE ROASTED PISTACHIO OIL** has an intensely nutty taste. We use it on its own as a condiment or toss it with warm boiled potatoes.

(16) Peanut oil's high smoke point makes it excellent for frying and sautéing. While most brands are bland tasting, **LION & GLOBE PEANUT OIL**, from Hong Kong, has a distinctly peanutty taste.

(17) Clean tasting and satiny, grapeseed oil is a great all-purpose oil, reliable at high temperatures or used fresh in a dressing. Our favorite, **SCALIGERA GRAPESEED OIL**, produced near Verona, Italy, has a pleasing hint of nuttiness.

(18) Rich coconut oil adds fragrance and body to South Indian curries and is perfect for cooking dishes with tropical flavors. With its smooth, balanced taste, **PARACHUTE COCONUT OIL**, from India, is our go-to brand.

MICHAEL KRAUS

COOK'S LIBRARY

We cherish **PARISIAN HOME COOKING** (William Morrow, 1999) by the late chef Michael Roberts for teaching us how Parisians cook day in and day out. From the building of impromptu meals based on market purchases to making your own rillettes (potted meats), this gem reveals

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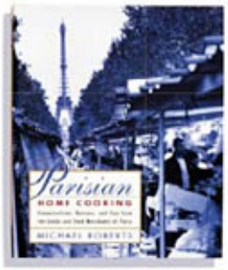
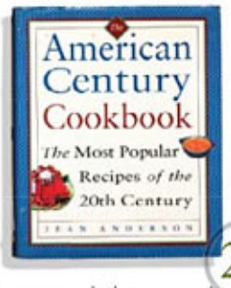


the wisdom and celebrates the passion of French cooks. —*N.W.*

For American cooking, our perennial resource is Jean Anderson's captivating **AMERICAN CENTURY COOKBOOK** (Clarkson Potter, 1997), which approaches the recipes of 20th-century America chronologically, charting the evolution of



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soups, salads, casseroles, and so on. Few cookbooks are this much fun, thanks to Anderson's tart writing, archival images, and wealth of information, which serve as a guide to our most influential culinary benchmarks, from chicken divan to blackened redfish. —*N.W.*

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GREAT HOME COOKS

FRIENDLY FOES

Kitchen Stadium it was not, but on a recent Sunday afternoon, in the smallish kitchen of a two-story wood-frame house in the Chicago suburb of Wilmette, gladiatorial combat was being waged. Four couples—teachers, lawyers, and advertising professionals by trade—and their kids had convened at the home of Chris and Laurey Tussing for the 22nd installment of a remarkable home-cooking competition that the group of friends has dubbed **IRON CHEF CHICAGO.** Today's chosen ingredient: squash. Laurey Tussing led off with luscious butternut squash ravioli, which was followed by Sloane Stegen's roasted kabocha squash gnocchi (above) and then an ethereal winter squash soufflé from the reigning champ, Liz Feiertag. The eight competitors, who were also the judges, shuttled food from the kitchen to the dining table, where they marked their scorecards and knocked back glasses of wine. When the winner was announced—the ravioli, by a landslide—a few groans of disappointment could be heard, but mostly there was applause. "It's about the camaraderie, not the competition," said participant Vicky Mangosing Almiron. Then Chris Tussing chimed in: "It depends on who you're talking to."

LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS (2); RIGHT: BETH ROONEY

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EVERYDAY HEROES

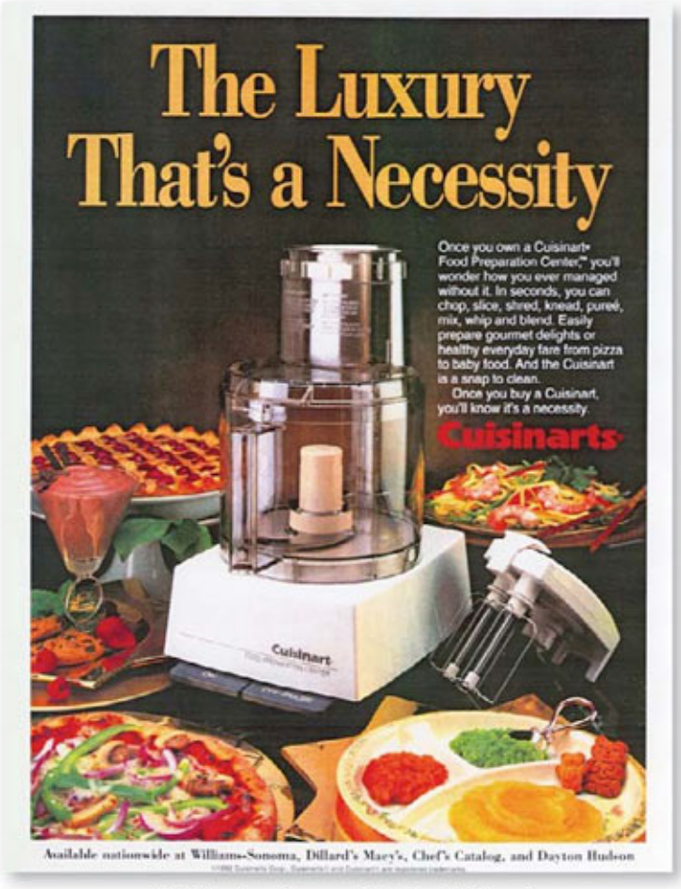
Blades of Glory

WE PROBABLY WERE GIVEN our first **CUISINART FOOD PROCESSOR** as a housewarming gift or a wedding present, and it instantly placed within easy reach a world of sauces, spice pastes, salads, soups, breads, pie doughs, and more. Cooking with the Cuisinart felt like something magical. You took a potato, placed it in the plastic cylinder, pushed it through the spinning disk grater, and suddenly it was not just a potato anymore but perfectly shredded wisps, soon to be hash browns or latkes.

Of course, we still love our kitchen knives—especially for items like minced herbs, which can be bruised by automated blades, or ingredients that benefit from being diced to a uniform size—but once we'd embraced progress, there was no turning back. "The Cuisinart democratized who could be a good cook," says Barbara Haber, a food historian. "It used to be that if we wanted to make chopped liver, say, we had to use a bowl with a sort of half-moon gadget that you'd bang away with for a long, long time. Only very ambitious cooks would ever make certain foods before the Cuisinart came along."

For this we have a man named Carl Sontheimer to thank. In the early 1970s, the semiretired MIT physicist from Greenwich, Connecticut, came across a restaurant-grade food processor called the Robot-Coupe at a cookware convention in France. It was big and unwieldy and expensive, but the "robot cutter" in the act of slicing and dicing was a wonder to behold. Sontheimer, who had lived in France and loved to cook, shelled out for a few Robot-Coupe machines, sent them home to tinker with, and worked out an agreement with the device's manufacturers to adapt their design for American home cooks.

He spent the next two years refining the shape of the chopping blades, improving the mechanism for feeding food into the machine, adding safety features, and recalibrating the weight distribution of the grating disks so that they would spin smoothly over many years of use. In 1973, he deemed his creation ready. It consisted of a clear plastic bowl resting atop a white base that housed an electric motor. The motor drove a set of interchangeable cutting and mixing implements, including a metal chopping and puréeing blade, a plastic dough blade, a slicing disk, and a grating disk. He unveiled his invention, under the name Cuisinart Food Processor, at the National Housewares Expo in Chicago later that year.



A 1992 advertisement for the Cuisinart.

COURTESY CUISINART

The Cuisinart didn't sell all that well at first. Then, in 1975, an article about the appliance appeared in *Gourmet* magazine, and suddenly everyone from James Beard to Julia Child (who had both owned Robot-Coupe processors) was singing its praises. The then *New York Times* food editor Craig Claiborne compared it to the printing press, the cotton gin, and the paper clip. Within two years, the invention had spawned no fewer than 30 imitators from companies like Sunbeam and Hamilton Beach. We've used some of those other products, and they get the job done; just not as well: proof that obsessive perfectionism like Sontheimer's sometimes pays off. Sontheimer died in 1998, but we're reminded of his legacy every time we rev up our Cuisinart.

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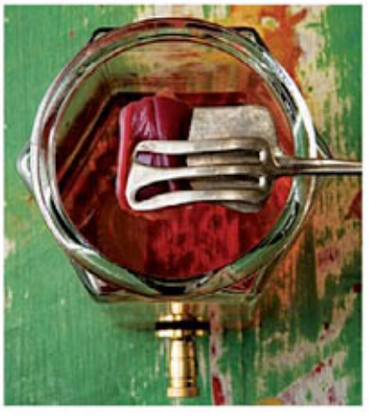
DO IT YOURSELF

SWEET AND TART



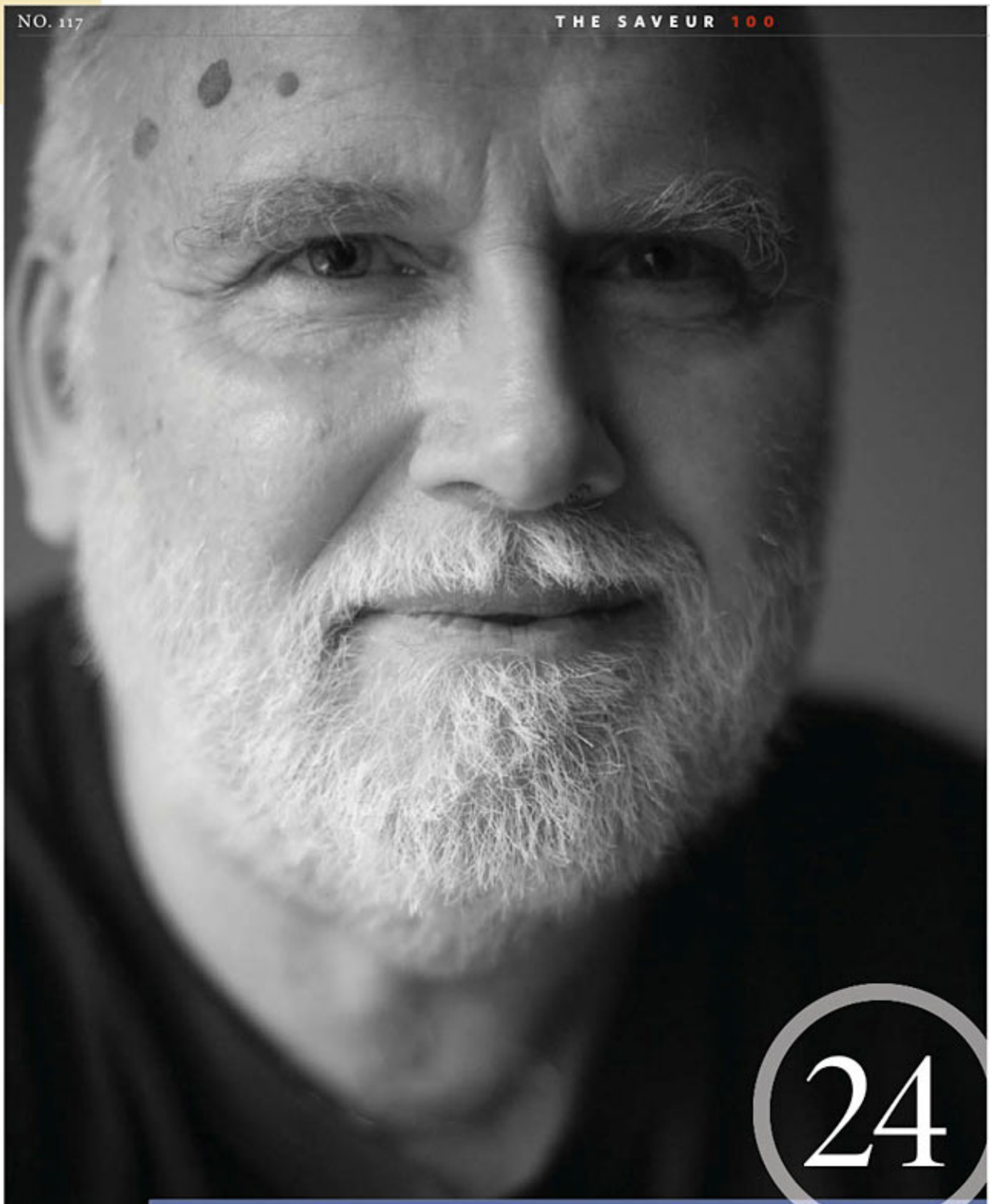
We enliven our cooking with all sorts of commercially produced vinegars (see page 82 for some of our favorites), but the variety we like the most is the **HOMEMADE WINE VINEGAR** we make ourselves. Since ancient times, cooks throughout the world have been making good use of leftover wine by putting up vinegar; the result adds sourness to everything from salad dressings to pan sauces. Our version, which we prepare by adding a live bacterial culture called a mother (a gelatinous mixture of acetic acid bacteria and yeast that helps convert alcohol to vinegar) to rosé wine and letting it age, retains the wine's sweet, crisp character. It's so good, you could sip it on its own.

Rosé Wine Vinegar

1. **8-oz. jar mother of vinegar culture for red or white wine**
2. **cups rosé wine, plus more as needed**

To a 1-gallon glass jar or crock with a spigot, add the mother of vinegar culture (above right, top) along with its liquid. Add wine (above right, middle) and 1 cup water. Cover mouth of jar with a triple layer of cheesecloth and secure with kitchen twine or a rubber band (this will allow in air, essential for the conversion of alcohol to vinegar, but keep out contaminants). Set aside in a warm, dark place. As the conversion begins, a new translucent, gel-like culture will form on the surface of the liquid. After 2 weeks, add 2 more cups wine. Continue adding 2 cups wine every 2 weeks until you have added as much as a gallon total of liquid and the vinegar has attained a sufficiently tart taste. The vinegar is at its best after a period of 2–3 months. When you like how the vinegar tastes, strain it into a large nonreactive pot. Over medium heat, bring vinegar to 155°; hold vinegar at 155° for 30 minutes. Pour into glass bottles. Let cool; store in refrigerator.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)



LANDON NORDEMAN

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Poet of the Everyday The milieu of celebrity chefs and food fads couldn't be farther from the kitchen of **JOHN THORNE**, which isn't to say the 65-year-old, Massachusetts-based author doesn't have insights to offer on the topic. He's won praise for creating, in partnership with his wife, Matt Lewis Thorne, a canon of practical recipes, inquisitive essays, and musings on all manner of culinary themes. Thorne shares his discoveries in his homespun newsletter, *Simple Cooking*, excerpts from which have been anthologized in collections from North Point Press, including *Serious Pig* (1996) and *Mouth Wide Open* (2007). Equal parts curious and erudite, Thorne could be called a philosopher of the American kitchen, a man as adept at illuminating the anthropological underpinnings of the supermarket soup aisle as he is at puzzling out the perfect meatball recipe. Ultimately, the satisfaction to be found in everyday cooking is the true north to which all his writing returns. "What delights me about cooking is not getting things right," he told us, "but messing with them enough to keep things interesting." ✪

A Q&A with Thorne at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

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Seven years ago, a handful of food enthusiasts in the United States and Britain banded together to launch an online community called **eGULLET** (egullet.org). Life in the home kitchen hasn't been the same since. Before eGullet, we would share our culinary queries with our friends and family. In the eGullet era, we can cast our questions and opinions—whether they be about soup dumpling recipes or the best cuts of meat sold at a local Costco—into the world at large. And the world answers. The conversations on eGullet, as on other food sites, touch on restaurants and travel, but its main purview is the home kitchen, and the site's message boards sing with the voices of thousands of enthusiastic cooks from across the globe. We love how this no-frills site has brought cooks together and democratized the world of food: on a forum about braising, you're as likely to glean a tip from a self-taught home cook in Arkansas as from a well-known food authority, like the cookbook author Paula Wolfert. The site, which is run out of cofounder Steven Shaw's Manhattan apartment, has given home cooks a platform for exploring their passions, no matter how generalist or geeky: Nathan Myhrvold, the former chief technology officer for Microsoft, for instance, is famous for his frequent posts about the scientific experiments he conducts in his kitchen. "EGullet members," says Shaw, "are true believers in the power of food to nourish, spiritually and intellectually."

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EVERYDAY HEROES

Buxom Beauties

Despite their widespread popularity, **CHICKEN BREASTS**, I must point out, get a bad rap these days. Spurious foodies love to proclaim them bland and pedestrian compared with the bird's dark-meat cuts. Indifferent butchers bone them and skin them and hack them into anemic cutlets; food manufacturers process them into nuggets, patties, and "tenders"; and heedless consumers rarely exploit their more exciting possibilities. But there's good reason why the plushy breast is the best-selling food in the supermarket meat aisle. Cooked on the bone (whole or split), it looks plump and sumptuous. It tastes sweet and nurturing. With its blanket of skin, which crisps in the pan or under the broiler, enfolding two layers of tender, juicy meat on the bone, the chicken breast is a perfect package.

The truth is, without the chicken breast, there would be no chicken kiev, cordon bleu, piccata, parmesan, pot pie, à la king, aspic, tetrazzini, or divan. The versatile meat lends itself equally well to poaching, baking, broiling, roasting, grilling, and frying, and its mild savor adapts to virtually every seasoning, from lemon juice to star anise. Given its buxom but streamlined shape, the breast also couldn't be better suited to stuffing with all sorts of ingredients. Since it is so lean, it takes well to meaty fillings, like prosciutto, whose fat melts inside the chicken, enriching the meat as it cooks. The breast can be dressed up or down: I swoon when I sink my teeth into a juicy, crisp Southern fried chicken breast, and I'd just as soon catch the next flight to France if I could be certain that a serving of the majestic, creamy, truffled mini-roast known as suprême de volaille à la périgourdine awaited my arrival.

Champions of chicken breasts like me tend to be outspoken on the object of their passion, but I don't think I've met anyone who was more wantonly vocal on the matter than a certain lady in Memphis who had just vetoed another belle for membership in the town's Junior League. "Do you want to know how tacky the woman is?" she huffed indignantly. "She makes her chicken salad with dark meat!" —*James Villas, author of* Dancing in the Lowcountry *(Kensington, 2008) and* The Bacon Cookbook *(Wiley, 2007)*

Chicken Breasts Stuffed with Raclette, Herbs, and Prosciutto (SERVES 4)

- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- Kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. chopped thyme leaves, plus 12 sprigs
- 1 tbsp. chopped tarragon
- 4 thin slices prosciutto
- 4 slices raclette cheese, about 1 oz. each
- Ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 lemons, halved
- 1/2 cup chicken broth

① Using a knife, make a deep, 3"-wide cut into thickest part of each breast, to form a pocket. Smash garlic with the side of a knife. Add a pinch of salt; scrape garlic against cutting board to make a paste. Pile chopped herbs on top of garlic; chop together. Smear each prosciutto slice with garlic mixture. Wrap each piece of cheese with a prosciutto slice; stuff into breasts; tie breasts as shown on page 85. Tuck 3 thyme sprigs under twine of each breast. Season with salt and pepper.

② Heat oven to 475°. Heat oil in a 12" ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken breasts, skin side down and brown, 6–8 minutes. Transfer skillet to oven and roast for 18 minutes. Flip breasts and cook until skin crisps, about 5 minutes. Transfer breasts to 4 plates; remove and discard twine. Place skillet over high heat; add lemons, cut side down. Cook until browned, 3 minutes. Add broth and reduce by half. Serve chicken, garnished with sauce and lemon.

GOING PRO

Home kitchens are fertile ground for a multitude of ideas, some of them entrepreneurial. All around the world, from the streets of Delhi to the apartment blocks of Newark, hardworking home cooks sell foods that they prepare in their own kitchens. Some vend their wares from carts; others cater for parties or prepare sandwiches, cakes, granola, and other dishes for sale at stores in their communities. For many, like Irma De Los Santos of Laredo, Texas (pictured in her kitchen, below), their **HOME-BASED FOOD BUSINESSES** began with a signature dish. "People were always asking me to make my tamales," she said. So, in 1976, she and her sister started pre-

paring batches to sell after she was laid off from her job. The popularity of her corn husk-wrapped tamales, filled with such stuffings as chicken, pork, and chiles, grew by word-of-mouth; in an average week, she may make a few dozen for her regular customers, but during the holiday season she sells as many as 36,000 to devotees across the state. More than just a source of income, small enterprises like De Los Santos's have given a sense of pride and self-sufficiency to people lacking the time or the means to invest in a full-time business. "People from all over the world have eaten my tamales," De Los Santos says, "and that feels good."

FROM LEFT: ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

GREAT HOME COOKS

HAPPY TOGETHER

Most weekend afternoons, in the recently remodeled kitchen of their home in Lidingö, Sweden, **JOAKIM AND NIVA DAHL** can be found preparing supper side by side. Niva (right, foreground), a 46-year-old television producer, usually takes on most of the prep work; "I am a true perfectionist when it comes to slicing and dicing," she says. Joakim (background), 42 and a film editor by trade, usually has the job of finding the ingredients (in the summer months he gathers wild foods, such as mushrooms and lingonberries, from the woods just behind the house) as well as the actual cooking. Today, the couple, married for eight years, are making a Swedish classic, biff à la Lindström (pan-fried venison burgers flavored with chopped pickled beets). The dish has a special resonance for Niva. "My great-uncle invented it," she says. As Joakim cooks the burgers, Niva stands nearby, chopping parsley for a garnish. As we watch them work together, it occurs to us that the act of cooking—particularly with someone we're close to—is often as satisfying as the meal itself.

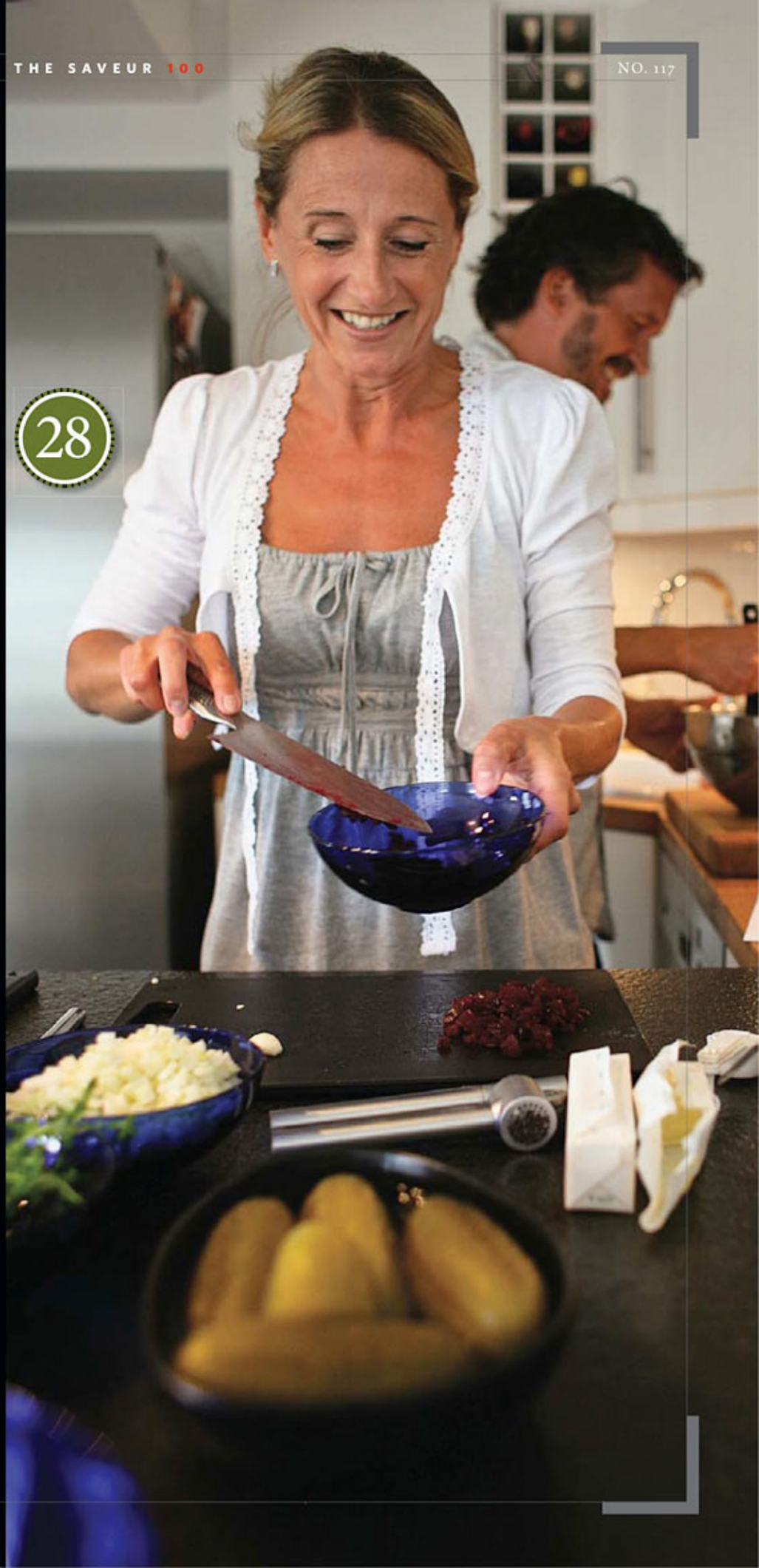
Biff à la Lindström *Swedish Venison Burgers*

(SERVES 4)

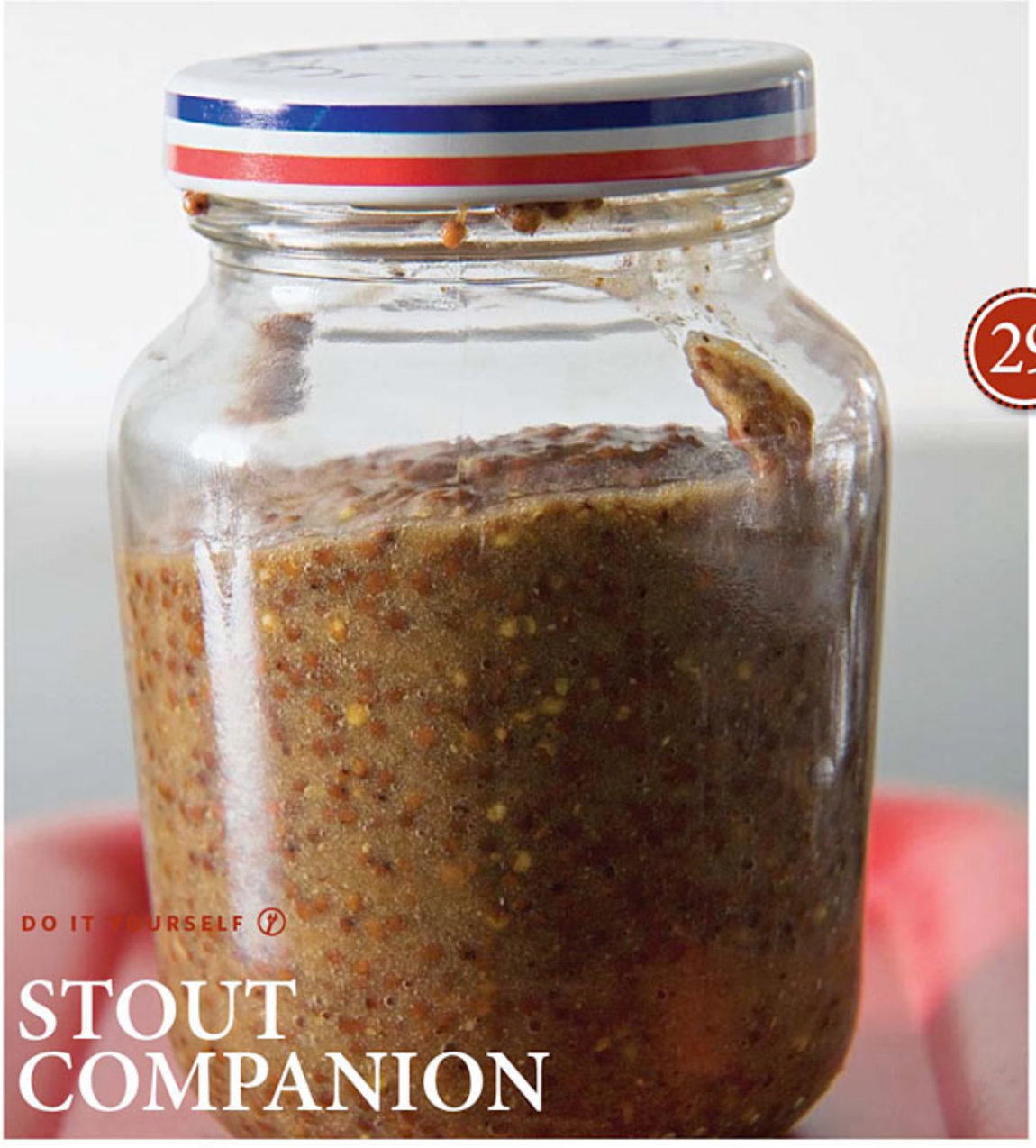
- 1 lb. ground venison or beef
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- 5 tbsp. finely chopped pickled red beets, plus 2 tbsp. juice
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped dill pickles
- 2 tbsp. capers, chopped
- 2 tbsp. dark beer
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- ½ medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, 2 tbsp. diced
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

① In a bowl, combine the venison, bread crumbs, beets with their juice, pickles, capers, beer, salt, pepper, eggs, garlic, onions, and diced butter; mix to combine. Divide the mixture into 8 portions and form 1"-thick patties.

② Heat 2 tbsp. butter in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add half the patties; cook, flipping once, until browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Wipe out skillet; repeat with remaining butter and patties. Sprinkle burgers with the parsley.



JAMES OSELAND



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DO IT YOURSELF

STOUT COMPANION

The ancient Romans first described a process for making a condiment with the seeds of mustard plants; since then, countless versions of the food we now call mustard have evolved. Of all the jars lining our refrigerator door, our favorite is **HOME-MADE WHOLE-GRAIN MUSTARD**, flavored with brown mustard seeds (which possess a pronounced but not searing heat) and Guinness beer (which lends a malty character and hints of sweetness). We slather it on sausages or sliced ham, mix it into gravies and vinaigrettes, or use it as a base for a rémoulade (a cold sauce of herbs, capers, and pickles with mayonnaise).

More about mustard at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

Spicy Guinness Mustard (MAKES 3 1/2 CUPS)

- **1 12-oz. bottle Guinness Extra Stout**
- **1 1/2 cups brown mustard seeds (10 oz.)**
- **1 cup red wine vinegar**
- **1 tbsp. kosher salt**
- **1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- **1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **1/4 tsp. ground cloves**
- **1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg**
- **1/4 tsp. ground allspice**

Combine ingredients in a nonreactive mixing bowl (above right, top and middle). Cover with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 1–2 days so that the mustard seeds soften and the flavors meld. Transfer the mixture to the bowl of a food processor (above right, bottom) and process, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, until the seeds are coarsely ground and the mixture thickens, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a jar and cover. Refrigerate overnight and use immediately or refrigerate for up to 6 months. (The flavor of the mustard will mellow as the condiment ages.)

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)

THE RIGHT GEAR

Pots and Pans

We've found these durable, versatile pieces of cookware to be the absolute best in their class, whether we're searing, simmering, poaching, braising, or frying. (For more great pots and pans, see page 66.)

(30) Our saucepans are the most popular pots in our kitchen: we recruit them for gravies, for delicate sauces like béchamel, and even to boil our morning egg. The best are made with a sandwich of different metals; our favorite is the 3-ply, 3-quart **ANOLON ULTRA CLAD SAUCEPAN**, which includes layers of fast-heating aluminum and durable, nonreactive stainless steel.

(31) Copper pots are the most efficient conductors of heat, so foods get hot lightning fast and cook evenly. The downside? They're expensive. We think the stainless steel–lined 3.1-quart **MAUVIEL COPPER WINDSOR SAUCEPAN** is well worth the price: its flared sides (the signature feature of a windsor pan) speed up evaporation, a boon when you're reducing sauces and sautéing. The pot is heavy enough that we can stir without holding the handle, leaving one hand free to tend to dishes on other parts of the stove.

(32) From Germany to Morocco, home cooks rely on pressure cookers, which use steam to create a high-pressure chamber, to get dinner on the table fast. Pressure promotes speedy cooking, allowing dishes like beef stew to get done in half the time, without losing any of their tender juiciness. Our favorite is the 6-quart **FAGOR DUO PRESSURE COOKER**, with its comfortable handle, stainless-steel body, and easy-to-control settings.

(33) A nonstick pan is our choice for frying eggs and delicate fish filets. The 10-inch **T-FAL ULTIMATE FRY PAN**, from the French company that pioneered nonstick cooking in the 1950s, is the sturdiest around. Unlike Teflon-coated pans, it has a hard surface, made of a plastic-based resin called PTFE, that is virtually scratchproof and stands up to metal utensils.

(34) The 4-quart **ALL-CLAD STRAIGHT-SIDED SAUTÉ PAN** is a multipurpose workhorse with a stainless-steel exterior and a quick-heating aluminum core. Its wide, flat surface offers maximal contact with the stove-top heat source, and the straight sides help trap moisture.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

A recipe for steak pizzaiola, pictured in the pot at bottom left at SAVEUR .COM/ISSUE117

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FOUNDATIONS OF FLAVOR

RED ALL OVER

MAKE-AHEAD FLAVOR BASES—pastes, sauces, and spice mixtures used variously as soup or stew starters, marinades, rubs, and condiments—are the friend of home cooks all over the world. In North Africa, cooks have long relied on a garlicky chile paste known as **HARISSA** to lend depth to cooked meats and vegetables. The paste is traditionally made by soaking dried chiles (we've found that a variety of North American chiles are good substitutes for North African ones) in water until they're soft, then pounding them in a mortar with garlic and various spices. The result is a paste that can be added to dishes while they cook; we use it in the broth we cook couscous in and stir it into red lentil soup. Harissa is also commonly served on its own or diluted with fresh chopped tomatoes or olive oil as a dipping sauce for meats or breads. We've found it to be so dependable in its ability to liven up foods that we use it in all sorts of ways, including serving it alongside scrambled eggs and crudités.

More suggestions for using harissa at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

Harissa (MAKES 1 CUP) Based on a recipe in *A Mediterranean Feast* by Clifford Wright (William Morrow, 1999).

- **8 dried guajillo chiles, stemmed and seeded (about 2 oz.)**
- **8 dried new mexico chiles, stemmed and seeded (about 1½ oz.)**
- **½ tsp. caraway seeds**
- **¼ tsp. coriander seeds**
- **¼ tsp. cumin seeds**
- **1 tsp. dried mint leaves**
- **3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed**
- **1½ tsp. kosher salt**
- **5 cloves garlic**
- **Juice of 1 lemon**

Put chiles into a medium bowl, cover with boiling water, and let sit until softened, about 20 minutes. Heat caraway, coriander, and cumin in an 8" skillet over medium heat. Toast spices, swirling skillet constantly, until very fragrant, about 4 minutes. Transfer spices to a grinder with the mint and grind to a fine powder. Set aside. Drain chiles and transfer to the bowl of a food processor with the ground spices, olive oil, salt, garlic, and lemon juice. Purée, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl, until the paste is very smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a sterilized 1-pint glass jar and fill with oil until ingredients are submerged by ½". Refrigerate, topping off with more oil after each use. Paste will keep for up to 3 weeks.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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ONE-DISH FEASTS

GOLDEN STANDARD

It's the archetypal family meal, a layering of sauce, cheese, and pasta that delivers comfort to the core and pleases every palate. Our favorite **LASAGNE** is a vegetarian take on classic, creamy lasagne bolognese. In it, the meat is replaced with earthy shiitake mushrooms and the noodles aren't boiled before baking, so they're less mushy when they come out of the oven.

Vegetarian Lasagne (SERVES 6–8)

- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 12 sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1/2 cup flour
- 5 cups milk
- 1 tsp. ground nutmeg
- Salt and pepper
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 lbs. shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, quartered
- 1/2 lb. spinach, chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp. chopped oregano
- 1 tbsp. chopped thyme
- 1 tbsp. chopped rosemary
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 5 cups whole canned tomatoes, crushed
- 1 lb. lasagna noodles
- 2 1/2 cups grated grana padano
- 2 1/2 cups grated fontina

① Grease a 9"x 13" baking pan with 1 tbsp. butter. Cover dried tomatoes with 1 cup boiling water; soak for 20 minutes. Drain. Chop; set aside.

② Make béchamel: Heat 8 tbsp. butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and carrots; cook 5 minutes. Add flour; cook 2 minutes. Whisk in milk; boil. Reduce to medium-low; simmer, whisking, until thick, 20–25 minutes. Add nutmeg; season with salt and pepper.

③ Meanwhile, heat olive oil and remaining butter in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook 10 minutes. Add dried tomatoes, spinach, garlic, parsley, oregano, thyme, rosemary, and tomato paste; cook 3 minutes. Add canned tomatoes. Cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set sauce aside.

④ Heat oven to 375°. Spread 2 cups tomato sauce in baking dish. Cover with a layer of noodles. Spread 1 cup béchamel over top; sprinkle with 1/2 cup of each cheese and 2 cups tomato sauce. Repeat layering 2 more times. Top with remaining noodles, tomato sauce, béchamel, and cheeses. Bake covered with foil on a baking sheet for 1 hour. Remove foil; raise oven to 500°. Bake until golden, 15 minutes.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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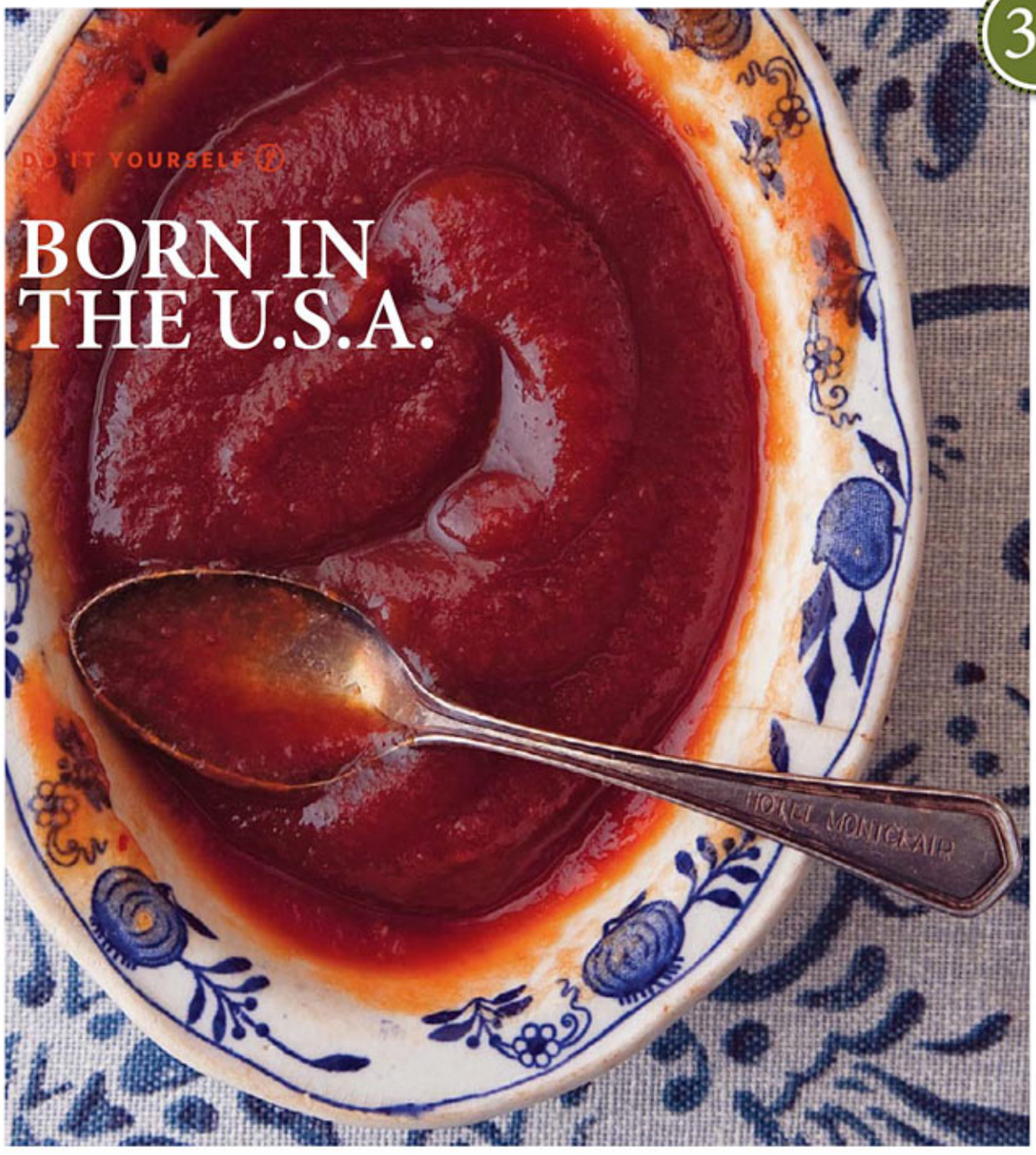
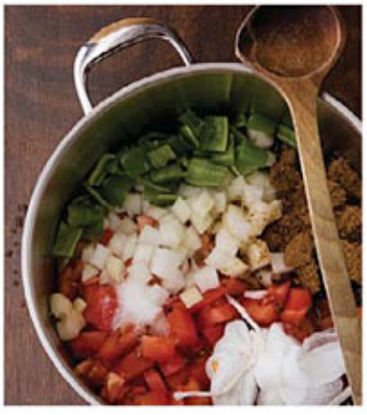
DO IT YOURSELF

BORN IN THE U.S.A.





After British traders introduced China's soy-based kê-tsiap to the Western world, American cooks reinterpreted the condiment, using ingredients like beans and apples. Tomato ketchup, enhanced with onions, herbs, and spices, became the most popular version (by 1915, more than 800 brands had been bottled in the United States), but over time, the food's complexity gave way to the cloying sweetness characteristic of today's mass-produced varieties. Our **HOMEMADE KETCHUP** echoes early-American versions of the food. Sweetened with brown sugar (not corn syrup), it pairs well with everything from french fries to meat loaf.

Ketchup (MAKES 2½ CUPS)

- **4 whole cloves**
- **1 bay leaf**
- **1 stick cinnamon**
- **¼ tsp. celery seeds**
- **¼ tsp. chile flakes**
- **¼ tsp. whole allspice**
- **2 lbs. tomatoes, roughly chopped**
- **1½ tsp. kosher salt**
- **½ cup white vinegar**
- **5 tbsp. brown sugar**
- **1 onion, chopped**
- **1 anaheim chile, chopped**
- **1 clove garlic**

Wrap cloves, bay leaf, cinnamon, celery seeds, chile flakes, and allspice in a layer of cheesecloth (above right, top); tie into a bundle and put into a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat along with tomatoes, salt, vinegar, sugar, onion, and anaheim chiles (above right, bottom); smash and add the garlic. Cook, stirring, until onions and chiles are very soft, 40 minutes. Remove spice bundle; purée sauce in a blender until smooth. Strain sauce through a mesh strainer into a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, 30 minutes. Add more salt, sugar, or vinegar, if you like. Transfer ketchup to a glass jar. Set aside; let cool. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)

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GREAT HOME COOKS

HOOKED ON CLASSICS

When **FRANK GRUBER**, an entertainment lawyer in Santa Monica, California, is in the mood for Chinese food, he doesn't reach for a takeout menu; he reaches for his 1973 edition of Lucy Ho's cookbook *Authentic Chinese Cooking*. When he's craving Italian, he'll grab his copy of Antonella Santolini's 1979 book *Umbria in Bocca*. And on a recent evening when he was cooking for friends, he turned to *The American Heritage Cookbook* from 1980 and found a recipe for a potato gratin flavored with anchovies, which he served with a haunch of roasted elk (pictured above). The nearly 100 classic cookbooks Gruber owns are more than just keepsakes; they are his daily inspiration in the kitchen. "I'll open three or four books at once," he says. "It's kind of like having a conversation with all of the writers; their personalities come out in their recipes." What's more, many of his older books place a greater emphasis on making things from scratch—like those anchovies, which he fileted and oil-cured himself. Overall, says Gruber, his cookbooks help him stay curious and stay rooted in a style of cooking that allows him to slow down and appreciate life a little more.

COOK'S LIBRARY

David Thompson's **THAI FOOD** (Ten Speed Press, 2002) set a new standard for Asian cookbooks. The nearly 400 regional recipes from

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Thailand, ranging from street food to banquet dishes, are accompanied by essays and cultural information that encourage us to understand Thai cooking in new ways. —*N.W.*

There are many good all-purpose cookbooks, but the tome we turn to the most—for information *and* inspiration—is still **THE NEW BASICS** by Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins (Workman, 1989). This 850-page treasure combines takeaway

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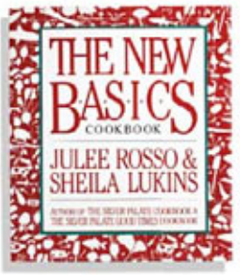

material (a guide to chile peppers, roasting charts, illustrations, and sidebars on everything from the history of pizza to homemade mayo) and a conversational tone that makes us feel as if we were in the kitchen with these amiable authors. —*N.W.*

RIGHT: DAVE LIEBERMAN; LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS (2)

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ONE-DISH FEASTS

TIP TO TAIL

One of the finest communal meals we know of is a whole fish cooked on the bone along with hearty accompaniments. Our favorite method for **WHOLE ROASTED FISH** is a Portuguese-inspired preparation in which a red snapper is stuffed with herbs and cooked in foil with sausage, potatoes, clams, olives, and fennel. We like to take the fish to the table still enclosed in its shiny wrapper, then slash it open to serve.

Whole Roasted Red Snapper (SERVES 6)

- 1 large bulb fennel
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 lb. fingerling potatoes, halved lengthwise
- 7 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. fresh linguiça or kielbasa, cut into ¼"-thick slices
- 1 whole cleaned red snapper (3 lbs.)
- 1 lemon, sliced into ¼"-thick half moons
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 10 sprigs thyme, plus 2 tbsp. thyme leaves
- 10 sprigs parsley
- ½ lb. mixed olives, pitted
- 12 littleneck clams
- ½ cup white wine
- Zest of 1 orange

① Trim and discard stalks from fennel; reserve 10 wispy fronds. Halve fennel bulb lengthwise; slice into ¼"-thick wedges. Bring 2 qts. salted water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan. Blanch fennel for 4 minutes; drain and set aside. Add potatoes to boiling water; reduce heat to medium; simmer until tender, 12–15 minutes. Drain potatoes; set aside.

② Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage; cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Set aside.

③ Heat oven to 475°. Cut 4 angled slits on each side of fish, about halfway to bone. Put a lemon slice into each slit. Line a baking sheet with an 18" x 24" sheet of heavy-duty foil. Transfer fish to foil. Rub with 3 tbsp. oil; season with salt and pepper. Stuff cavity with remaining lemon, thyme sprigs, and parsley. Arrange fennel, potatoes, sausages, olives, and clams around fish; sprinkle with remaining thyme. Drizzle with wine. Put an 18" x 24" piece of foil over top. Crimp edges together to form a packet.

④ Roast for 35–40 minutes. Cut into foil; carefully pull back edges. Sprinkle with zest, remaining oil, and fennel fronds.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

DO IT YOURSELF

SERIOUS SAUCE

Most of us keep a bottle of Lea & Perrins worcestershire sauce in our pantry, and rightly so: that English company made the condiment a household name after it began bottling the substance in 1838, and it's had a lock on it ever since—until now. This delicious **HOMEMADE WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE** has plenty in common with the bottled version, but it is bolder and bigger tasting and more redolent of its ingredients, including tamarind, ginger, cloves, cardamom, and other spices. We add it with abandon to bloody marys, and we rely on its pungent, herbaceous character to give unexpected dimension to marinades and sauces.

Worcestershire Sauce (MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS)

- **2 cups distilled white vinegar**
- **1/2 cup molasses**
- **1/2 cup soy sauce**
- **1/4 cup tamarind concentrate**
- **3 tbsp. yellow mustard seeds**
- **3 tbsp. kosher salt**
- **1 tsp. whole black peppercorns**
- **1 tsp. whole cloves**
- **1/2 tsp. curry powder**
- **5 cardamom pods, smashed**
- **4 chiles de árbol, chopped**
- **2 cloves garlic, smashed**
- **1 1" stick cinnamon**
- **1 anchovy, chopped**
- **1 yellow onion, chopped**
- **1 1/2" piece ginger, peeled and crushed**
- **1/2 cup sugar**

Combine all ingredients except the sugar in a 2-qt. saucepan (above right, top and middle); boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cook sugar in a skillet over medium-high heat until it becomes dark amber and syrupy, about 5 minutes. Add caramelized sugar to vinegar mixture and whisk to combine; cook sauce for 5 minutes; transfer sauce to a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Refrigerate, covered, for 3 weeks; strain to remove solids (above right, bottom); return to jar. Refrigerate for up to 8 months.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)

MICHAEL KRAUS

PANTRY ESSENTIALS

SALT

Good-quality salt—whether it's kosher salt, sea salt, or one of the myriad other types available these days—does a lot more than make foods salty; it heightens the flavors in a dish and even enhances texture. Here are five kinds that have a permanent place in our kitchen.

43 Of all the kosher salts to be had, **DIAMOND CRYSTAL** is our favorite. The crystals are of a unique, pyramidal shape that makes them dissolve quickly on both hot and cold foods. This is our favorite everyday salt for cooking.

44 Little known outside Japan, **HAKATA ROASTED SEA SALT** is a fine-grained marvel with a lingering, almost meaty flavor. Prized by Japanese cooks for its purity, the salt is excellent for sprinkling atop raw and grilled fish and for adding deep notes to ramen soups.

45 Delicately flaky, fruity-tasting **MURRAY RIVER SALT**, from the Murray Darling Basin in New South Wales, Australia, boasts a beautiful peach color produced by minerals in the water from which the salt is harvested. Its crunchy grains dissolve quickly, so it's ideal for using atop a leafy salad.

46 **LE PALUDIER FLEUR DE SEL DE GUÉRANDE**—pristine salt crystals harvested from marshes along the southern coast of Brittany, in western France—is one of the world's most sought-after salts. It delivers a burst of flavor and crunch when sprinkled on a finished dish, be that a pork chop or a simple omelette.

47 This coarse gray sea salt, called **GRIGIO DI CERVIA**, is from Italy's Emilia-Romagna region, and its color derives from trace amounts of clay found in the salt beds there. High in moisture, this salt makes a wonderful, crackly crust on roasts and steaks.

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ONE-DISH FEASTS

BIG BRAISE

Oven-cooked meats, which work their wonders without much intervention, are a boon to home cooks. So are inexpensive cuts. Our favorite alliance of these two attributes is **MATAMBRE**, an Argentine dish (the name means hunger killer) that calls for covering a flank steak with vegetables and hard-boiled eggs and rolling it all together. For illustrated instructions on how to roll the steak, go to SAVEUR.COM/MATAMBRE.

Matambre *Vegetable-Stuffed Rolled Flank Steak* (SERVES 6)

- 1 flank steak (2 lbs.)
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. dried thyme
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 6 oz. baby spinach
- 4 boiled carrots, halved lengthwise
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and quartered lengthwise
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced crosswise
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 2 tsp. chile flakes
- 1½ cups beef stock
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

① Arrange steak on a cutting board so that the long side is parallel to you. Using a long knife, butterfly the steak to within ½" of the far edge so that it opens like a book. Put steak between 2 layers of plastic wrap. With a mallet, pound to a ¼" thickness. Poke steak all over with a fork. Transfer, cut side up, to a baking sheet lined with plastic wrap. Sprinkle meat with vinegar, garlic, and thyme. Cover with plastic wrap; let marinate for 6 hours or overnight in refrigerator.

② Heat oven to 375°. Arrange meat cut side up so that the grain is parallel to you; season meat with salt and arrange spinach evenly over top. Top spinach with carrots, arranging them evenly so that they run parallel to the grain. Place eggs between rows of carrots and scatter onion rings evenly over top. Sprinkle evenly with parsley and chile flakes and season with salt.

③ Starting with the edge closest to you, roll meat forward to form a tight cylinder. Using kitchen twine, tie the meat at 1" intervals. Heat oil in a 6-qt. oval dutch oven over high heat. Sear meat all over until brown, about 10 minutes. Pour in the beef stock and add enough water that it reaches one-third of the way up the meat. Cover, transfer to the oven, and cook until very tender, about 2 hours. Let matambre cool for 15 minutes. Slice and serve.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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GREAT HOME COOKS

BEST IN CLASS

On the first day of winter last year, **AMANDA GARBUTT**, a 20-year-old third-year sociology undergrad at McGill University, in Montreal, was in the small kitchen of her off-campus apartment making braised lamb shanks for a few friends. The lamb recipe had come from a Bobby Flay cookbook, but she'd done some tweaking. "I added honey and balsamic vinegar," she explained. "I love the interplay of heat and sweet." As she reduced the braising liquid to a syrupy sauce and began to pull the tender lamb from the bones, a guest, hoping to pitch in, made a move to throw the bones away, but Garbutt stopped him: "I'm saving them for stock," she said. In every way, Garbutt (above, second from left) seemed to exude the resourcefulness of a chef, which she insists she doesn't aspire to be, even though her dinners have earned her a reputation as an exceptional epicure. That's part of what we find inspiring about her: although she's of an age more closely associated with dorm food and eating on the run, she represents a growing contingent of young adults that makes real cooking a part of everyday life.

Garbutt's recipe for braised lamb shanks at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

COOK'S LIBRARY

For all things fish related, we've found no better source than **RICK STEIN'S COMPLETE SEAFOOD** (Ten Speed Press, 2004), a handsome, amply illustrated volume that details the selecting, handling, and cooking of every species imaginable. Stein, a British chef and teacher, has helped us become as comfortable with hake and lobster as we are with carrots and potatoes. —*N.W.*

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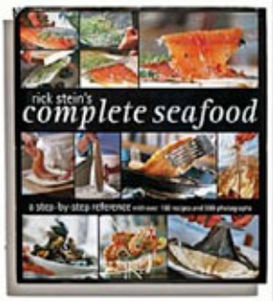

Good technique is rooted in an understanding of ingredients and how they work; no book teaches that better than **LA VARENNE PRATIQUE** (Crown, 1989) by the renowned cooking teacher Anne Willan. From showing how to peel a mango to how to slice onions the right way, this is an empowering tome, illustrated with hundreds of step-by-step photographs. —*N.W.*

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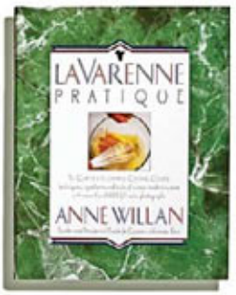

LEFT: DAVE LIEBERMAN; RIGHT: MICHAEL KRAUS (2)

53
52
58
57
COUERICHON
STRIKE

THE RIGHT GEAR

Tools

The proper kitchen implement can transform even the most banal cooking task into a pleasurable activity. Here are seven that deserve to be permanent residents of every home cook's tool drawer.

52 The thin, flexible **NOGENT CLASSIC KITCHEN SPATULA** slips easily under delicate items like fish filets and turns them without breaking them. Since it's both slotted and heatproof, it's also ideal for extracting food from frying oil.

53 The utilitarian, Swiss-made **R. H. FORSCHNER BY VICTORINOX CHEF'S KNIFE** sells for about half the price of other popular chef's knives. The rosewood handle is lightweight, and the high-carbon stainless-steel blade is easy to sharpen.

54 Invented by a Swiss army veteran named Alfred Neweczeral in the 1940s, the **ZENA STAR ECONOMY PEELER** is still the sharpest and most comfortable one we've found. A nifty *U*-shaped attachment near the blade removes potatoes' eyes with a flick of the wrist.

55 Long-lasting stainless-steel **WÜSTHOF KITCHEN SHEARS** are indispensable for a wide range of kitchen tasks. They're muscular enough to separate a whole chicken into its parts and refined enough to snip delicate herbs and salad greens.

56 When we need a perfect julienne, we turn to the German-made **BÖRNER THIN JULIENNE CUTTER**, which is far safer to use than a traditional mandoline, rests securely atop a bowl, and produces utterly uniform pieces.

57 The heavy-duty silicone **RUBBERMAID HIGH HEAT SCRAPER AND SPATULA** can be used for tasks like scraping out a bowl, frosting a cake, or folding egg whites into a batter, and with its exceptional heat resistance (up to 500 degrees), it also comes in handy for sautéing.

58 A simple stainless-steel coil wrapped around a curved wire, the diminutive **COMBRICHON "MAGIC" SPOON MINI WHISK** is dandy for scraping up caramelized bits from a saucepan's hard-to-reach corners and for whisking drizzles of cream or eggs into sauces.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

COOK'S LIBRARY

For dependable recipes for the basic breads of the world (more than 300 of them, from Russian black bread to French sourdough), we cherish Bernard Clayton's **THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BREADS**,

59

first published by Simon & Schuster in 1973 and available in a revised edition from 2003. We've always found Clayton, a retired magazine reporter and serious hobbyist baker who turns 95 this year, a wise and comforting guide. —*N.W.*

We know of no dessert book more comprehensive, helpful, and assured than **IN THE SWEET KITCHEN** by the

60

Canadian pastry chef Regan Daley (Random House, 2000). Daley demystifies ingredients—there are 14 pages on eggs, 25 on flour, 19 on fats—and the mastery of techniques. The recipes are outstanding, from one for shortbread to one for an exquisite nectarine tart. —*N.W.*

LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS (2); RIGHT: MARCELO BARABANI

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GREAT HOME COOKS

HUNGRY SCHOLAR

"People started asking me about food, and I wasn't happy to say, 'I don't know.'" That is how **NEIDE RIGO**, a 47-year-old Brazilian nutritionist and self-taught culinary documentarian, describes the flowering of her life's passion: traditional Brazilian cooking and ingredients. We're sitting in the garden of Rigo's house in São Paulo as she gets ready to prepare braised pork ribs with couve, or collard greens, which grow in the garden alongside mangaritos (a potato–like tuber) and other native foods that Rigo catalogues on her blog, Come-se (To Eat). Rigo is a true national treasure (when the Spanish chef Ferrán Adria visited Brazil recently, she provided him with details about local ingredients), but as we sit down to our meal, a triumph of simple flavors, Rigo insists that the goal of all her scholarship is just good eating. —*Giovanna Tucci, reporter for the newspaper* O Estado de São Paulo

Couve *Sautéed Collard Greens* (SERVES 4)
These Brazilian-style greens are more brightly flavored than the long-simmered collards popular in the American South. Wash and remove stems from 15 collard green leaves; arrange leaves in stacks and roll them into tight cylinders. Slice each cylinder crosswise into very thin strips. Heat 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add 4 cloves thinly sliced garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until just golden, about 2 minutes. Add greens, season with kosher salt to taste, and cook, stirring occasionally, until greens are wilted and bright green, about 4 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

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FOUNDATIONS OF FLAVOR

SEASONED START

THE FRENCH HAVE their mirepoix, a flavor base of minced onions, carrots, and celery sweated in butter and oil. The Italians rely on a similar mixture, called battuto. But few flavoring bases are so intensely flavored as Puerto Rico's **SOFRITO**, a piquant paste of onions, peppers, chiles, garlic, and herbs that cooks fry in oil before adding other ingredients to make soups, stews, and dishes like rice with pigeon peas. The seasoned starter becomes a vehicle for flavor, carrying the essence of the chiles and herbs throughout the dish. We're so crazy for sofrito that we make large batches to keep in our refrigerator, at the ready for stirring into sauces, adding to vinaigrettes, or rubbing over chicken before roasting. We also take cues from Puerto Rican cooks who freeze it in ice cube trays, then thaw a portion whenever they need it to add depth and spice to a dish.

More suggestions for using sofrito at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

Sofrito (MAKES 2 CUPS) Courtesy of Oswald Rivera, author of *Puerto Rican Cuisine in America* (Running Press, 2002).

- **¼ lb. aji dulce chiles or Italian frying peppers, stemmed, seeded, and roughly chopped**
- **8 sprigs cilantro**
- **6 leaves flat-leaf parsley**
- **1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped**
- **1 medium green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped**
- **1 clove garlic**
- **1 tbsp. vegetable oil**

Combine all the ingredients in the bowl of a food processor and purée, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, until a semicoarse paste forms, about 1 minute. Refrigerate the sofrito for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 3 months.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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DO IT YOURSELF

FIRE WITH FLAVOR

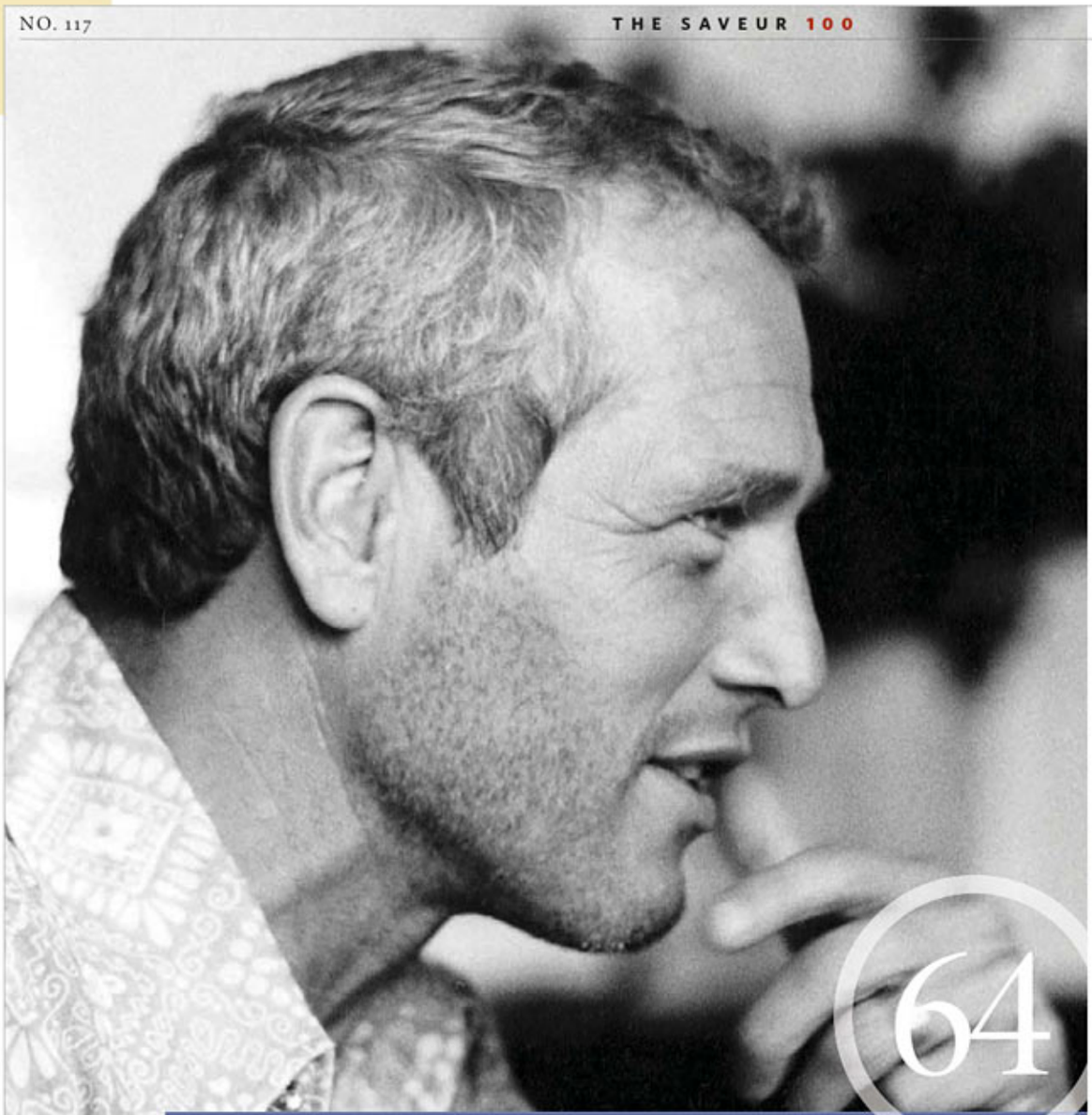
Supermarkets these days sell hot sauces of every hue and Scoville heat unit rating, with names like Mad Dog's Revenge and Wanza's Wicked Temptation. Some are good; others sacrifice flavor for heat. Our recipe for **HOMEMADE HOT SAUCE**, however, is in a league of its own. A purée of chiles and salt aged in vinegar, this fiery yet fruity condiment made in the manner of the traditional Louisiana version, a 19th-century invention that evolved out of Mexican, English, West African, and Caribbean preparations popular since the colonial era. We drizzle it on eggs and grits, stir it into gumbo, spike salsa with it, and run out of it way too fast.

Hot Sauce (MAKES 2½ CUPS)

1 **lb. mixed medium-to-hot fresh red chiles, like fresno, holland, or cayenne, stemmed (fresno and holland are pictured)**
3 **tbsp. kosher salt**
2 **cups distilled white vinegar**

Rinse the chiles in a colander under hot running water; pat dry. Transfer chiles to the bowl of a food processor (above right, bottom) along with the salt. Process, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, until finely chopped, about 1 minute. Transfer the chile mixture to a glass jar. Cover and let sit in a cool place to ripen for 2 days, without stirring. Uncover and stir in the vinegar. Cover and let sit in a cool place for 5 days to let age and allow the flavors to meld. Set a mesh strainer over a bowl. Pour the chile mixture into the strainer and press it through the mesh screen with the back of a spoon. Discard solids. Pour sauce into a glass bottle with a tight-fitting lid. Refrigerate for up to 6 months. Shake before each use.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)



TRINITY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/ALAMY

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Giving Back I was 11. Gerald Ford was in office. We were in a restaurant on Second Avenue in New York City. The place was empty except for another couple and their kids. "It's *Newman*," my mother whispered. "Don't stare, for God's sake," my father said. I slurped my fettuccine alfredo. "Don't slurp," my father said. "But *they're* slurping," I replied, motioning to the kids at Newman's table. They could have been any family, but they weren't. And their father wasn't just any man. And yet, to those who knew him, **PAUL NEWMAN**, who passed away in 2008, was just a regular guy, deeply devoted to his adopted hometown of Westport, Connecticut, where he lived for nearly 50 years. A tinkerer in the kitchen who liked to do his own grocery shopping, the Hollywood actor seated across from my family all those years ago would go on to become one the world's greatest culinary philanthropists—and a staunch ally of millions of harried home cooks with taste but no time. One Christmas, the story goes, he gave his neighbors bottles of homemade salad dressing, and Newman's Own was invented. What followed was a line of ready-made pasta sauces, salsas, marinades, and more, all born of Newman's love of simple food and his abiding belief in giving as good as you get. Newman didn't need the money, so he donated all his profits to charity—over $250 million, to date. In 2006 Newman cofounded a restaurant in Westport called the Dressing Room. His favorite meal there? "The PL Newman burger," the Dressing Room's chef, Michel Nischan, told me recently. "Cooked medium rare, with cheddar and grilled onions." Regular grub for a regular guy who turned food into pleasure for millions. —*Elissa Altman, a blogger at the Huffingtonpost.com* ✪

BRAVE NEW WORLD

We love our broken-backed cookbooks and our recipe boxes stuffed with index cards, but the truth is that these days many home cooks are taking inspiration from the Internet as often as they are from paper and ink. And that poses an interesting problem: short of printing out and filing away every online recipe that piques your interest or creating a bookmark drop-down menu on your browser that's a mile long, how do you conveniently store, organize, and share your electronic recipes? Enter our favorite Web development in recent memory: **ONLINE RECIPE-MANAGEMENT TOOLS**. Software packages such as MacGourmet (macgourmet.com) and BigOven (bigoven.com) save and catalogue recipes in formats that allow users to sort and search by theme ("family meal", say) or ingredient ("fennel bulbs"); to e-mail recipes with ease; to print recipes onto index cards or preformatted recipe book pages; and, in some cases, to upload recipes to an iPod or a PDA. Some of them let you rescale recipes to make bigger or smaller quantities, convert measurements to or from metric, and compile shopping lists of ingredients you'll need. We've also gotten hooked on Delicious (delicious.com); no, it's not a food blog or a recipe tool. It's a "social bookmarking" site that lets you collect online bookmarks (in our case, for recipe pages) from all over cyberspace, share them with others, and see what recipes like-minded users have discovered out there in the boundless banquet that is the World Wide Web.

65

See page 80 for a recipe for onion tart with goat cheese (in sheet pan) and page 77 for a recipe for Asian greens with garlic sauce (in wok); a recipe for black-and-white brownies (in glass backing dish) can be found at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117.

THE RIGHT GEAR

More Pots and Pans

66 The hefty 12-inch **LODGE LOGIC CAST IRON SKILLET** is one of the most versatile tools a cook can own: we fry in it, we sauté in it, and we use it to sear meats on the stove top before roasting them in the oven. Cast iron gets extremely hot and maintains high, even temperatures, which gives foods the tastiest char. Traditionally, cast-iron pans require seasoning to develop a satiny, nonstick surface; this one comes preseasoned with vegetable oil and is ready to use.

67 Hardly a day goes by when we don't use a rimmed sheet pan, so we seek out the most durable, sturdiest ones we can find. Our favorite, the half-size **LINCOLN FOODSERVICE HEAVY DUTY SHEET PAN**, is made from a thick aluminum alloy that won't warp or buckle, even in the hottest oven. It turns out perfectly bronzed cookies and biscuits every time.

68 The tough, simple, and capacious 12-quart **CARLISLE DURA-WARE STOCKPOT** has a towering profile, which minimizes evaporation, conserving liquid when you're boiling pasta or preparing soups. Made of professional-grade aluminum, which heats up quickly, this kitchen stalwart has an extra-thick base that conducts heat well and reduces the risk of scorching.

69 Because glass retains heat more effectively than metal does, it responds better to lower oven temperatures, so it's the best choice for casseroles, brownies, and baked pasta dishes. And because glass is nonporous and nonreactive, it doesn't rust, stain, or impart undesirable flavors to food. The 9-by-13-inch **ANCHOR HOCKING GLASS BAKING DISH** is the toughest and longest-lasting everyday glass baking vessel we know.

70 We prize woks for their ability to cook food quickly and evenly over intense heat and also because their broad, semicircular profile allows us to toss and stir ingredients with ease. We rely on the American-made **PRECISION WOK**; its carbon-steel composition makes it heat up faster than other models we've tried, distributes heat smoothly and evenly, and seasons with age. Its flat bottom is compatible with gas, electric, and glass-topped stoves. **(For other great pots and pans, see page 48.)**

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

1952
Original Kettle

1958
The Westerner

1966
The Wishing Well

1967
The Seville

1972
The Barrel Bar-B-Q

2000
The One-Touch Platinum

2000
The One-Touch Gold

2008
Smokey Joe

71

Keepers of the Flame

When given a choice between grilling with gas and grilling with charcoal or wood, we'll take the latter every time. Sure, you have to wait longer for the heat, but it's always worth it. As we keep telling our gas-grilling friends, it's about more than touching food to flame: those glowing coals of oak or mesquite or even plain black charcoal impart smoky flavors of their own that a gas flame can never deliver. There are plenty of charcoal grills out there—low-riding hibachis, ten-dollar pan grills, tall Brinkman grill-smokers—and we've used them all, even loved a few of them, but, really, we'd always rather build our fires in a **WEBER KETTLE GRILL**.

Uncovered, this sturdy, bowl-shaped grill, introduced in the 1950s and more or less unchanged since, lets us cook foods like steaks, burgers, fish filets, and vegetables at exactly the right distance from the coals, and the Weber's broad, grated bottom makes it easy to mass the coals off to one side so that we can put our food on the other and cook it gently over indirect heat. When we throw on the domed cover, the Weber transforms into both an oven and a smoker, preventing flare-ups and allowing food to cook slowly and evenly as the coals fade. We get such good results with our Weber that we'll haul it out and build our fire in the dead of winter just to, say, grill a chicken. After nothing more than a rubbing of olive oil and a sprinkling of sea salt, we lay the chicken on the steel grate away from the coals, secure the cover, open the vents enough to keep the fire alive, crack open a beer, and let the Weber do its work, cooking the bird in its enameled-steel cocoon until the meat is tender, juicy, and infused with mouthwatering hints of smoke.

The prototype for this midcentury marvel was created in Chicago in 1952, when George Stephen, an engineer at Weber Brothers Metal Works, an outfit that supplied the Chicago Park Service with metal buoys for the city's harbors, concluded that he'd burned one too many roasts in the brick fireplace he'd constructed behind his house. Looking for an outdoor cooking vessel that would allow him to control the flow and intensity of heat more easily, Stephen cut a steel buoy in half, added a few adjustable vents, fitted one half with a rounded lid, welded a handle to it, and set the contraption on a tripod. Intent on convincing the public of his invention's merits, Stephen loaded the grill into his station wagon and went on the road to spread the Weber gospel.

"It's the story of the American entrepreneurial mind's thinking, 'I can do better,'" said Stephen's son, Jim Stephen, CEO of Weber-Stephen Products, the Palatine, Illinois–based company that his late father went on to found. The company has since expanded its line, adding fancier—and, in some cases, fanciful—models (a few of which are shown above) of both the charcoal and gas varieties, but we've never seen much need to change such a near-perfect invention.

COURTESY WEBER-STEPHEN PRODUCTS CO. (8)

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GREAT HOME COOKS

MOTHER SICILY

Even on an island as famous for its home cooks as Sicily is, 73-year-old **MARGHERITA CHIARAMONTE**, of the southeastern town of Modica, is in a league of her own. Her cooking, marked by a simple clarity of flavor, relies on vegetables and herbs from her garden with ingredients produced nearby. "Her cooking speaks the village's language, mood, and tradition," says her son, Carmelo, a chef in the Sicilian city of Pedara. Chiaramonte's food reflects the seasonality and flexibility inherent in Sicilian cooking—her scaccia modicana, a calzone-like bread, is studded with tomatoes, parsley, and ricotta in the summer and wild chicory and black currants in the winter—and she prepares dishes that few restaurants serve anymore, like zuppa di grano cuturru, a soup made with seasonal greens (left) and a local variety of bulgur wheat. Often she serves it with her handmade ricotta ravioli, which she sets on a wooden board that she places between her and Carmelo so that mother and son can do as their ancestors did and feast from a common plate. —*Roberta Corradin, a Rome-based food journalist*

Zuppa di Grano Cuturru *Sicilian Greens and Bulgur Soup* (SERVES 6)

- 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 large onion, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
- ½ lb. beet greens or turnip greens, stems and leaves chopped separately
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh sage
- ¼ tsp. chile flakes
- 8 cups chicken broth
- 1½ cups bulgur wheat
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ lb. escarole, washed and roughly chopped
- 6 tbsp. grated pecorino
- 1 lemon, sliced into 6 wedges

Heat 3 tbsp. oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onions, and greens' stems and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add rosemary, sage, and chile flakes and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add broth, bulgur, and 1 cup water. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until bulgur is soft, 20–25 minutes. Add greens and escarole and cook, stirring occasionally, until wilted, about 5 minutes. Divide soup between 6 bowls. Drizzle each with some of the remaining olive oil; sprinkle with the pecorino. Serve with lemon wedges.

FRANCESCA MOSCHENI

American Bounty

We live in a golden age of food shopping. In addition to the countless small specialty food shops that satisfy our yearning for choice and quality, supermarkets—those American icons of abundance—are better than ever. The best, we think, are independently owned or belong to small chains that are deeply rooted in their communities. Here are ten of our favorites.

73 BERKELEY BOWL *Berkeley, California* If the produce department at Berkeley Bowl (pictured on facing page) isn't the nation's largest, then it's certainly the best. The selection of heirloom tomato varieties alone—50 to 80 on a typical day—makes this Bay Area market worth traveling for. Owner Glenn Yasuda, the son of the farmers who opened Berkeley Bowl in 1977, moved the store to a larger location in 1999 and made its other departments—wine, bulk goods, breads—as impressive as the produce.

74 BRIGHTON BAZAAR *Brooklyn, New York* With an in-house bakery, a frozen-food section packed with pierogi and pel'meni (dumplings), and a deli stocked with dozens of types of sausage and smoked fish, the six-year-old Brighton Bazaar could be called the nation's high temple of Eastern European home cooking. Located in Brighton Beach, home to the country's largest population of Russian-born residents, this supermarket also boasts a kaleidoscopic array of prepared foods.

75 JUNGLE JIM'S INTERNATIONAL MARKET *Fairfield, Ohio* Jim Bonaminio, who started Jungle Jim's in 1971 from the back of a truck he drove from neighborhood to neighborhood around Cincinnati, has built his business into a 300,000-square-foot culinary theme park complete with a fish farm and a full-service butcher counter that offers just about every meat imaginable, including lambs' and cows' heads and kangaroo. Vast sections of the store are dedicated to Latin American, Indian, Philippine, and kosher goods.

76 MI PUEBLO *San Jose, California* The first Mi Pueblo supermarket opened in the shell of an old meat market in San Jose in 1991; owner Juvenal Chavez now runs 11 California branches that sell everything a Latin American food lover might crave. At his newest and largest San Jose store, for example, you can choose from several cremas (similar to French crème fraîche), each reflecting a different regional style; buy fresh chickpeas; and dine in the café on outstanding carnitas (roasted pork) tacos and half a dozen kinds of aguas frescas (fresh-fruit drinks).

77 MT SUPERMARKET *Austin, Texas* In 2006, with the opening of Austin's Chinatown Center mall, the Ly family transformed its 22-year-old My Thanh Oriental Market into the 55,000-square-foot MT Supermarket. With dozens of varieties of Asian greens and ultrafresh (as in alive) seafood, MT's expanded offerings reflect the diverse cuisines of the city's growing Vietnamese, Indonesian, Chinese, and other Asian communities.

78 PHOENICIA SPECIALTY FOODS *Houston, Texas* The Lebanese émigré Zohrab Tcholakian opened Phoenicia Deli in 1983 and a small grocery store offering products imported from the Middle East in 1992. Three years ago Tcholakian expanded the store to make it a football field–size supermarket (the deli, justly famous for its shawarma sandwiches, remains open across the street). Persian cucumbers? Check. Twenty-foot olive bar? Check. Fresh dates and green almonds? Greek, French, Bulgarian, Romanian, and domestic feta? Fresh-baked pita, lavash, and barbari? It's all here.

79 POMEGRANATE *Brooklyn, New York* They've got house-made mozzarella, hand-stuffed olives, prime rib dry-aged on-site, and a whole freezer devoted to gefilte fish. Pomegranate is, after all, one of the largest kosher supermarkets in the United States. Newly opened in the heavily Orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Midwood, Brooklyn, it's destination shopping for the observant as well as for those who simply insist on high-quality ingredients, whether matzo meal or organic yellow carrots.

80 SEDANO'S *Miami, Florida* A trusted source for Cuban products since 1962, Sedano's, now the country's largest independently owned Latino supermarket chain, is reaching out to second-generation Latinos and to a broader range of cultures with bigger, brighter new or remodeled locations selling everything from Andean purple corn flour to Colombian papas criollas (potatoes in brine). The stores inspire fierce loyalty with their impressive meat selection, including custom cuts and whole pigs, cooked and uncooked.

81 UWAJIMAYA *Seattle, Washington* What began in 1928 as a small business selling fish cakes out of a truck now sells more than 20,000 Asian products, from fresh and dried noodles to fish and chile sauces, in its sprawling flagship store. Offerings like made-to-order sashimi platters, brown rice California rolls, produce grown on nearby farms, and Wagyu beef reflect a very particular convergence of global and local foodways.

82 THE WEDGE *Minneapolis, Minnesota* In the age of Whole Foods, how does a 1970s-era, member-owned food co-op survive? It so happens that The Wedge boasts higher sales per square foot than most mainstream supermarkets, and it's no wonder: the selection and quality of the products is extraordinary, and with its busy schedule of classes it functions as a culinary community center. The Wedge also offers online shopping for some products, fosters deep relationships with local growers through its distribution arm, and even sells produce grown on its own organic farm.

JAMES OSELAND

The produce department at Berkeley Bowl in Berkeley, California.

EVERYDAY HEROES

Pride of the Pantry

83

FROM RATATOUILLE to chicken tikka masala, beef bourguignon to steak pizzaiola, tomatoes play an integral part in many dishes we love. But prime tomato season is short, way too short. That's why we rely on—and, often, actually prefer—**WHOLE CANNED TOMATOES**. These pantry staples, a bulwark against winter blandness, are the epitome of year-round dependability and deliciousness.

We're not talking about the machine-diced ones, which lack succulence and substance, or canned tomato purée, which too often tastes insipid. We crave whole, peeled canned beauties, plump and firm and picked at the peak of ripeness. We love that they're ready to use—no blanching or peeling required. Need a quick pasta sauce? Pull a few tomatoes out of the can and crush them in your hand, letting the pulp slide through your fingers into the pan. Fancy a quick, tasty curry? Caramelize a few crushed whole tomatoes in clarified butter or oil along with whole spices, garlic, ginger, and meat. On nights when we're in need of comfort, fast, it's calming to know that with one whirl in the blender or the Cuisinart, we can have the start of a thick, fresh tomato soup. We add black pepper, lemon juice, and Tabasco to the juice of canned tomatoes for a bracing morning drink, or splash in some smoky oloroso sherry for an afternoon alternative.

A recipe for steak pizzaiola at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

Our supermarket shelves are lined with 28-ounce and 32-ounce cans of whole tomatoes packed by producers using different varieties of the fruit and various canning methods. Some of the tomatoes are round globe tomatoes; some are oval plum varieties. Some are as big as a fist; others are petite and cherrylike. We've met many cooks who swear by the Italian san marzano, a super-sweet variety of plum tomato grown mainly in the volcanic soils around Mount Vesuvius, and others who prefer the vibrant, intensely flavorful organic tomatoes grown in California's Central Valley and canned by Muir Glen (we're particularly fond of its smoky-tasting fire-roasted variety). We've always had a special affection for Red Pack tomatoes, whose oversize, firm fruit can be sliced neatly and mingles delightfully with mayonnaise and iceberg lettuce for a one-of-a-kind BLT sandwich. Personal predilections and cravings aside, one thing remains beyond debate: no matter the brand, at their best canned tomatoes have a sunny essence that sparkles on its own.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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ONE-DISH FEASTS

SOULFUL SUPPER

One-pot rice dishes can be remarkably adaptable and easy to cook. Our favorite is **PERLOO**, from the Lowcountry of South Carolina, a cousin of jambalaya that traces its origins to the family of Middle Eastern dishes known as pilafs. Like other rice-based specialties, such as arroz con pollo and biriyani, perloo can be made with a wide range of ingredients, in this case country ham and shrimp.

Shrimp and Oyster Perloo (SERVES 6)

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 lb. country ham, finely chopped
- 1/2 lb. kielbasa, cut on the diagonal into 1/4"-thick slices
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 3 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup long-grain rice
- 3/4 cup chicken broth
- 25 medium oysters, shucked (about 9 oz.), 1/2 cup of their liquor reserved
- 35 large shrimp (about 1 1/2 lbs.), peeled
- 5 scallions, chopped, to garnish

① In a 6-qt. pot, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add ham and kielbasa and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add onions, peppers, jalapeños, parsley, thyme, and cayenne and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add tomatoes and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid from the tomatoes thickens, about 10 minutes. Stir in rice, chicken broth, and oyster liquor. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, covered, until rice is almost cooked through, about 20 minutes.

② Stir in shrimp and oysters. Cover and continue to cook on medium-low heat until the shrimp are bright pink and the edges of the oysters have curled, about 10 minutes. Season with salt. Serve perloo sprinkled with the chopped scallions.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

FOUNDATIONS OF FLAVOR

DEEP SPICE

85

INTENSELY SEASONED CURRY pastes are the fulcrum of countless Thai dishes, from chicken curries enriched with coconut milk to fried rice and soups. One of the most flavorful and versatile versions is gaeng pet, or **THAI RED CURRY PASTE**, a vivid-tasting blend of toasted spices, such as coriander and cumin, that are traditionally mashed in a mortar with garlic, shallots, cilantro, lemongrass, and chiles. Although store-bought brands have their merits, nothing beats the fresh, homemade version. With a stash of Thai red curry paste in the refrigerator, we're reminded that its uses are multiple and in no way limited to Southeast Asian applications. We slather it over chicken wings or fish filets before grilling or broiling them, mix it with oil and rice wine vinegar to make a marinade for steak, and spike mayo with it to add verve to sandwiches. We've even been known to stir it into Western-style meat stews and ragùs, to add a complex note of fire and spice.

More suggestions for using Thai red curry paste at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

Gaeng Pet *Thai Red Curry Paste* (MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP)

- 8 **dried chiles de árbol, stemmed and seeded**
- 1 **tbsp. coriander seeds**
- 2 **tsp. cumin seeds**
- 1 **tsp. white peppercorns**
- 3 **cardamom pods**
- ¼ **cup roughly chopped cilantro (with stems)**
- 2 **tbsp. canola oil**
- 2 **tbsp. fish sauce**
- 2 **tsp. kosher salt**
- ¼ **tsp. freshly ground nutmeg**
- 5 **cloves garlic, smashed**
- 3 **shallots, roughly chopped**
- 2 **holland or fresno chiles, stemmed, seeded, and chopped**
- 2 **stalks lemongrass, tough outer layers discarded, tender interior layers finely chopped**
- 1 **1"-piece ginger, peeled and roughly chopped**

Break the chiles de árbol into pieces, transfer to a small bowl, and cover with 1 cup boiling water. Let soak until softened, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, add coriander, cumin, peppercorns, and cardamom to an 8" skillet over medium heat. Toast spices, swirling constantly, until very fragrant, about 4 minutes. Transfer spices to a grinder and grind to a fine powder. Set aside. Strain chiles de árbol through a sieve, reserving liquid. In a food processor, combine chiles de árbol, ground spices, cilantro, oil, fish sauce, salt, nutmeg, garlic, shallots, fresh holland chiles, lemongrass, and ginger. Purée until the paste is smooth, about 2 minutes. (Sprinkle in a tablespoon or two of reserved chile soaking water to help paste grind.) Refrigerate for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 3 months.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

GREAT HOME COOKS

PERFORMANCE ARTIST

86

To watch **SAMUEL LLOYD KINSEY** cook is to marvel at the fact that he has never worked in a professional kitchen. "I learned from my friends and family," said the New York City–based opera singer. And yet, Kinsey's home cooking is anything but amateur; his style is energetic, creative, and informed by tricks of the trade. His *batterie de cuisine* includes pieces of blue slate borrowed from a friend's backyard ("It's better than a baking stone for pizzas") and a restaurant-quality vacuum-packaging system, which he uses to seal meats in plastic for sous-vide cooking, the much ballyhooed restaurant technique. Kinsey is fanatical about ingredients, too. "A friend brought back this mullet bottarga from Sicily," he said of a hunk of preserved fish roe, which he shaved atop plates of spaghetti tossed with a sauce of caramelized fennel, tomatoes, and hot chiles (pictured, left)—just one of the six courses (among the others was a lasagne with a ragù of chicken hearts, gizzards, and livers) he prepared recently for a pasta-themed dinner. It all made for a soaring kitchen aria.

Spaghetti with Oven-Roasted Tomatoes and Caramelized Fennel (SERVES 2)

- 1 lb. plum tomatoes
- 4 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bulb fennel, cut into matchsticks
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 3 fresno chiles, finely chopped
- 1/2 lb. spaghetti
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Bottarga (optional)
- 1 cup toasted bread crumbs

① Heat oven to 250°. Core and halve tomatoes lengthwise; scoop out seeds. In a bowl, combine tomatoes, 1 tbsp. oil, sugar, salt, and pepper; toss. Arrange tomatoes, cut side down, on a parchment paper–lined baking sheet; roast until very soft, about 3 hours.

② Heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add fennel; brown for 10 minutes. Add onion; cook until soft, about 8 minutes. Add chiles; cook for 2 minutes. Chop and add tomatoes; set skillet aside.

③ Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until al dente, about 8 minutes. Strain, reserving ½ cup pasta water. Add pasta and its water to tomato mixture; toss. Put skillet over high heat; add parsley and remaining oil; cook for 2–3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with grated bottarga and bread crumbs.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

EVERYDAY HEROES

Best Bottles

We've always appreciated the way the right drink complements a meal, but we're fascinated with how **COOKING WITH WINE, BEER, AND SPIRITS** transforms foods by introducing new flavors and enhancing the ones already there. Here are the bottles we cook with the most.

Domaine de la Pépière 2005 Muscadet White wine boosts the sweetness and acidity of dishes. We love this crisp, unoaked muscadet from the Loire Valley, which adds hints of lime, flint, and herbs to poached salmon, risotto, or steamed mussels (pictured, right).

Charles Shaw 2005 Merlot An all-purpose red cooking wine, whether used for a pan sauce or marinade, should be well balanced, lightly oaked, and affordable. This one, bottled for the Trader Joe's chain and dubbed "Two Buck Chuck", hits all those notes.

Anchor Porter Beer supplies a rich and zesty backbone to many dishes, from boiled bratwurst to beef stew. We love this dark porter from San Francisco for the chocolate, molasses, clove, and coffee notes it adds to marinades, chilis, and braised short ribs.

Bodegas Dios Baco Amontillado Sherry Fortified wines, from port to madeira, round out intensely flavored dishes and add depth to mild ones. This barrel-aged sherry lends flavors of vanilla, oak, and butterscotch to baked beans, pan sauces, and sautéed mushrooms.

Pernod Infused with licorice, star anise, and other aromatics, this sweet liqueur behaves a bit like an extract—a pure expression of flavor. A dash of it in marinades, dressings, and seafood dishes, like bouillabaisse, the classic French stew, imparts a lovely fragrance.

FROM LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS (5); ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

Mussels with White Wine, Parsley, and Garlic (SERVES 4)

This recipe for mussels steamed with wine is based on one from Resto, a Belgian restaurant in New York City.

- 4 cloves garlic
- Kosher salt
- 4 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus ¼ cup leaves
- 6 anchovies, chopped
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups white wine (such as muscadet)
- 3 lbs. mussels, debearded (see page 86)
- Zest of 1 lemon

① Make a paste with the garlic and a little salt as described on page 86. Top garlic with chopped parsley and anchovies; chop together to form a smooth paste.

② Heat oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add paste; cook, stirring, until aromatic, about 2 minutes. Add wine; boil for 2 minutes. Add mussels; cover and steam until they open, 3–4 minutes. Sprinkle mussels with parsley leaves and zest. Toss with a spoon. Serve mussels and broth in bowls with crusty bread to sop up the savory liquid.

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GREAT HOME COOKS

IN HER ELEMENT

When **MEI TECK WONG** (above), a 64-year-old housewife living in Singapore, prepared dinner for us recently, we witnessed a natural, intuitive kind of home cooking that was far from the showy antics we've become accustomed to watching on television food shows and seeing in restaurants the world over. As Wong pulled from her refrigerator a bulb of garlic, a bunch of crisp Asian greens called choy sum, and a nub of ginger, the conversation flowed so easily in the kitchen that we were surprised at how quickly our meal appeared before us. The food (sliced pork tenderloin stir-fried with ginger and served with the choy sum) was of a purity and simplicity that made the ingredients shine. It reminded us of why we love Singaporean cooking so much—and why we love to cook in the first place.

Yau Choy Suen Tau *Asian Greens with Garlic Sauce* (SERVES 4) **The dish is pictured on page 66. If you can't find choy sum, whole baby bok choy makes a fine substitute. Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Meanwhile, trim ends from 1½ lbs. choy sum. Blanch greens in the water until just tender, about 1 minute. Drain greens and set aside on a plate. Heat 1 tbsp. peanut oil in a wok or a skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp. coarsely chopped garlic and cook until lightly browned, 1–2 minutes. Add 2 tbsp. soy sauce and 1 tbsp. water; cook for 1 minute. Pour garlic sauce over greens.**

COOK'S LIBRARY

A vegetable reference guide is important in today's kitchen for explicating the ever growing, ever more worldly array of produce that is available at groceries and farmers' markets. Elizabeth Schneider's illustrated encyclopedia **VEGETABLES FROM AMARANTH TO ZUCCHINI** (William Morrow, 2001) is that and much more. Schneider covers

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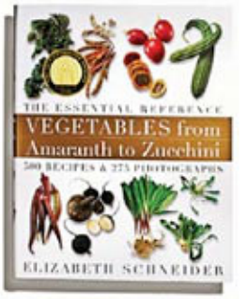


vegetables from dozens of families, from broccoli and squash to avocado and eggplant, providing not only historical and culinary reference information but also vivid color photographs showing vegetables presented side by side and, in many cases, sliced open to reveal the grain and color of their flesh. The photos are accompanied by wonderful descriptions of the ingredients' taste and texture, and the book's 500-plus recipes, for dishes like radicchio risotto, silky cardoon soup, and plantain and pork fried rice, are not only reliable but expertly chosen to demonstrate the characteristics of all these vegetables in their raw and cooked states. —*N.W.*

FROM LEFT: JAMES OSELAND; MICHAEL KRAUS

90

ONE-DISH FEASTS

WINTER WARMER

The hearty, meat-studded dish from southwestern France known as **CASSOULET** may be the ultimate one-pot meal. A slow-simmered mix of beans, pork sausages, pork shoulder, pancetta, and duck, the specialty takes its name from the earthenware *cassole* in which it was traditionally made. The crisped bread crumb crust atop this version contrasts appealingly with the hearty stew beneath.

Cassoulet *White Bean, Pork, and Duck Casserole* (SERVES 6–8)

- 1 lb. dried great northern beans
- 10 tbsp. duck fat or olive oil
- 16 cloves garlic, smashed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 large ham hocks
- 1 lb. pork shoulder, cut into 1" cubes
- ½ lb. pancetta, cubed
- 4 sprigs oregano
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 cup whole peeled canned tomatoes
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 4 confit duck legs (optional)
- 1 lb. pork sausages
- 2 cups bread crumbs

① Soak beans in a 4-qt. bowl in 7½ cups water overnight. Heat 2 tbsp. duck fat in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add half the garlic, onions, and carrots and cook until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add ham hocks along with beans and their water and boil. Reduce heat and simmer beans until tender, about 1½ hours.

② Transfer ham hocks to a plate; let cool. Pull off meat; discard skin, bone, and gristle. Chop meat; add to beans. Set aside.

③ Heat 2 tbsp. duck fat in a 5-qt. dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add pork and brown for 8 minutes. Add pancetta; cook for 5 minutes. Add remaining garlic, onions, and carrots; cook until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Tie together oregano, thyme, and bay leaves with twine; add to pan with tomatoes; cook until liquid thickens, 8–10 minutes. Add wine; reduce by half. Add broth; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, uncovered, until liquid has thickened, about 1 hour. Discard herbs; set dutch oven aside.

④ Meanwhile, sear duck legs in 2 tbsp. duck fat in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat for 8 minutes; transfer to a plate. Brown sausages in the fat, about 8 minutes. Cut sausages into ½" slices. Pull duck meat off bones. Discard fat and bones. Stir duck and sausages into pork stew.

⑤ Heat oven to 300°. Mix beans and pork stew in a 4-qt. earthenware casserole. Cover with bread crumbs; drizzle with remaining duck fat. Bake, uncovered, for 3 hours. Raise oven temperature to 500°; cook until crust is golden, about 5 minutes.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

91

Raising the Bar

As far as we're concerned, the ability to make an elegant, well-balanced cocktail is an essential component of the home cook's repertoire. Here are four time-honored BARTENDER'S TECHNIQUES that will serve the home mixologist well.

The flame (top left): Applying fire to citrus oils enhances their flavor and adds toasty caramel notes to whiskey- and gin-based cocktails like the rob roy and the tuxedo. Cut a thick, 1" circle of rind from a fresh orange. Light a match and hold it above the glass; grip the piece of rind by the edges, hold it skin side down above and to the side of the match, and sharply pinch the peel. This will send a spray of oil through the flame and onto the surface of the drink.

The stir (top right): Clear drinks like martinis and manhattans should be stirred, not shaken (which causes bubbles and froth to form). The key is to stir long enough for the ice to chill the ingredients thoroughly (the glass should feel very cold) without watering it down—a full 30 seconds isn't too long. Grip a bar spoon lightly near the top of its shaft as shown above and, moving only your wrist, gently but firmly swirl the spoon around.

Ten classic cocktail recipes at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE117

The crush (above right): Cracking ice cubes into jagged pieces increases their surface area, allowing them to melt faster and mellow the alcohol's bite while also making the drink easier to stir. The most efficient—and dramatic—way to crack ice is to place the cubes in a sturdy canvas bag and whack them a few times with a mallet.

The shake (right): As a general rule, cocktails that contain heavy ingredients like eggs, dairy products, fruit juices, or cream liquors should be shaken so that you get a lovely froth with a minimum of effort. Most bartenders do so using a Boston shaker: a pint glass topped with a metal tin. Fit the tin over the glass and give it a tap to seat it firmly. Holding the shaker and glass as pictured at right, shake them vigorously end to end for ten seconds. Give the glass a thump with the heel of your hand to break the seal before removing it.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)

92

EVERYDAY HEROES

Brilliant Bulbs

SOMETIMES I AM ENVIOUS of **ONIONS**, of their capacity to reinvent themselves and change. When they're raw, they have a sharp, sulfurous bite, lending high notes and crunchiness to a juicy hamburger or a tossed salad. When they're cooked, they become something else altogether. They sigh and wilt, and, finally, after a long and languid simmer that fills the kitchen with an appealing aroma like no other, they surrender their edge and turn sweet. Caramelized to melting softness, they are the foundation for countless dishes, from tortilla español to French onion soup. That onions are an everyday staple almost everywhere in the world, a food so fundamental to good eating and cooking as to be almost an afterthought, belies their mystical nature.

I always keep at least a few onions on hand, and usually more than a few: maybe bulbous red ones in their shiny parchment coats; maybe a stray bunch of bright green spring onions; or perhaps a pink-fleshed shallot or two, ready for service. Suddenly, a soup, a sauce, a tart, an omelette, or a battered and fried snack is within reach.

There are hundreds of varieties of onion, ranging from the sharp-tasting yellow ones that come in three-pound bags to the sweet kinds, like vidalia and walla walla. The vast world of onions also includes flat Italian onions, tiny torpedo onions, and hulking naga negi onions, all of them members of the noble Allium family, to which garlic, ramps, and chives also belong. They take their name from *unus*, the Latin word for one, because each plant produces a single bulb. Early in their lives, all onions are crisp and juicy with stout green stems; as they age and are air-cured for storage, their stalks shrivel and their tastes intensify.

Onions can be pickled or spiced; braised in stock or simmered in cream; roasted in the company of chicken or pork; shaved and fried to frizzles; cooked in beef broth and gratinéed; sliced and pan-roasted with cauliflower and peppers; tossed with anchovies, pine nuts, and pasta and baked under bread crumbs; browned with potatoes and coriander; or scattered over puff pastry and baked into a tart. Whatever I do with them, onions somehow always reveal themselves to me anew. —*Molly O'Neill, author of* Mostly True *(Scribner, 2006)*

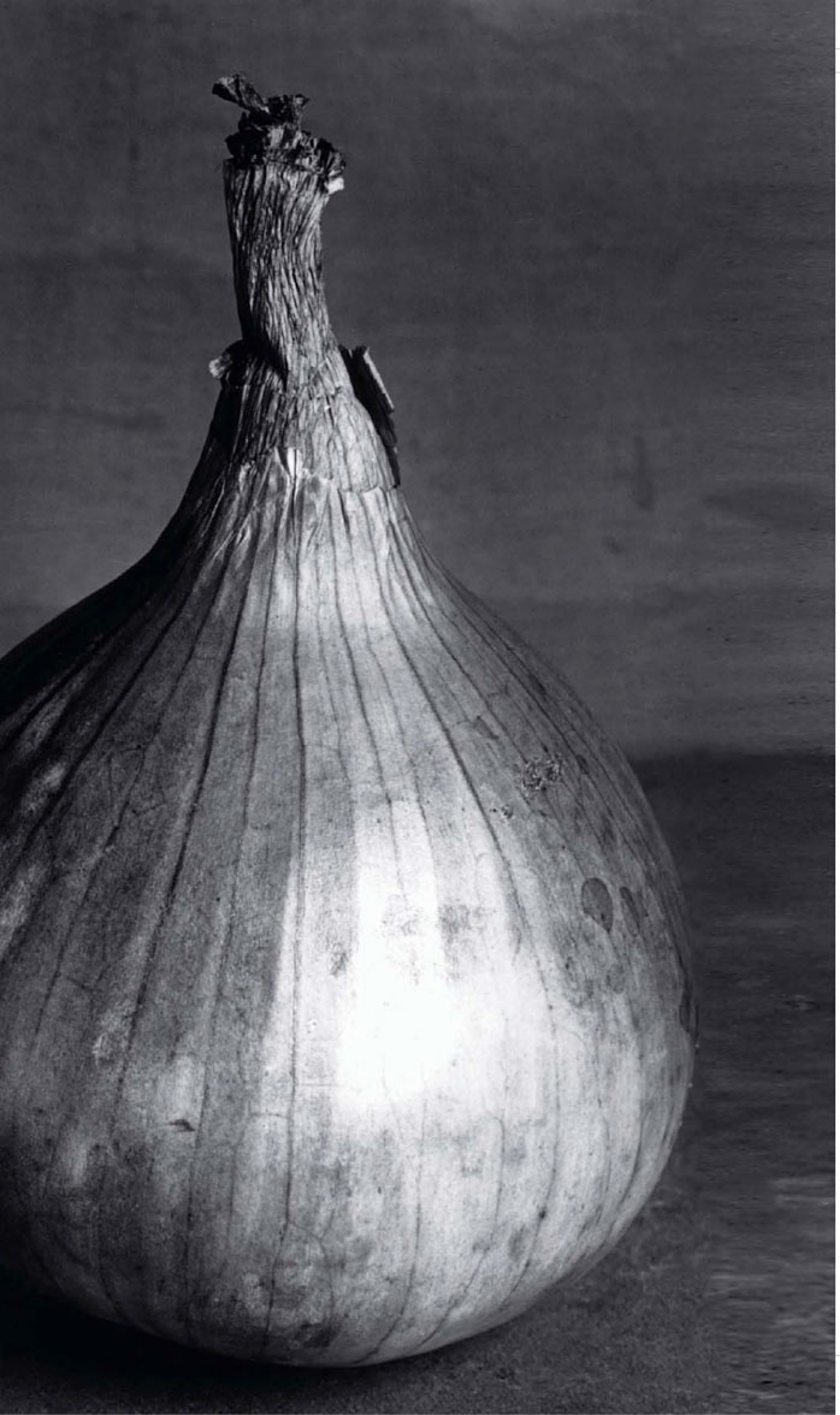
Onion Tart with Goat Cheese (SERVES 12) *Pictured on page 66*

- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 12 large spanish onions, thinly sliced
- 6 tbsp. thyme leaves
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt
- 2 9" x 11" sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed and chilled
- 4 tbsp. grated parmesan
- 3 tbsp. capers
- 24 anchovy filets
- 4 oz. goat cheese
- 3 tbsp. chopped parsley
- Zest of 1 lemon

① Heat butter in a wide-bottomed pot over high heat. Add onions, thyme, and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions begin to brown, about 25 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; cook, stirring, until caramelized, about 40 minutes. Set aside.

② Heat oven to 350°. Fit pastry sheets into a parchment paper–lined 13" x 17¾" rimmed baking pan, pressing them against sides. Trim inside edges of pastry sheets so that they just meet in center. Prick bottom of pastry with a fork. Spread parchment paper over pastry; fill with dried beans or pie weights. Bake until edges are golden, about 25 minutes. Remove paper and beans or pie weights. Bake until bottom is golden, about 20 minutes. Let cool.

③ Spread onions over crust. Sprinkle with parmesan and capers; arrange anchovies over top. Dot with goat cheese. Bake until golden, about 30 minutes. Garnish with parsley and zest.



CHARLES JONES/CORBIS

THE NEW HOME EC

Home economics, the junior-high and high-school elective that aims to teach students the culinary and domestic arts, has long struggled to be taken seriously. And, sure, many of us remember the bland food, the disturbing gelatin salads, and the Americanized "ethnic" dishes of some home ec classes back in the day. But home ec has always had its virtues, too, serving as a platform from which people advocated for public health, school lunch programs, progressive child care, access to higher education, and—not least of all—healthful and practical home cooking. This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of home ec programs in American schools and the fact that today a **NEW GENERATION OF HOME EC TEACHERS** is reinventing the curriculum with an emphasis on technique and fresh ingredients. We honor teachers like Sara Riley of Normal, Illinois, whose teenage students learn knife skills and an appreciation for seasonal produce. We are inspired by Meri-lin Piantanida in Keystone Heights, Florida, whose high-schoolers volunteer at farmers' markets. We cheer on leaders like Lorraine Tanguay, who helped create a vegetable garden at her middle school in a financially struggling community in rural Maine. "We always try to teach our kids self-sufficiency," she says. What's more, she says, gender is not an issue. "A lot of boys learn to cook, and a lot of girls take shop." —*Laura Schenone, author of* A Thousand Years over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances *(W. W. Norton, 2003)*

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PANTRY ESSENTIALS

VINEGAR

Acidity—the cardinal quality of vinegar—is as vital as saltiness and sweetness are to the flavor balance of foods. A good vinegar imparts other important qualities, too, such as fruitiness, depth, and fragrance. We make sure we have at least half a dozen to choose from; below are our six favorites.

94 Rich, assertive malt vinegar is a classic ingredient in pickles as well as in Indian vindaloos. The English, who wouldn't eat fish-and-chips without it, swear by **SARSON'S MALT VINEGAR**, and so do we.

95 **TRADITIONAL ACETO BALSAMICO OF MONTICELLO** is a rich, woody balsamic vinegar from New Mexico that is aged in oak for eight years. It's extremely pricey but worth the splurge.

96 Unfiltered, unpasteurized, and fermented in French oak for more than two years, **VERGER PIERRE GINGRAS NATURAL HAND-CRAFTED CIDER VINEGAR**, from Quebec, brings true apple flavor to dressings, glazes, and chutneys. It's the finest cider vinegar we've tried.

97 With its bright tanginess, coconut vinegar adds zest to ceviches and other marinated seafood dishes. Our favorite, **DATU PUTI COCONUT VINEGAR**, from the Philippines, also works well in vinaigrettes.

98 Austrian-made **GEGENBAUER TOMATO VINEGAR** begins as pure tomato juice and is fermented and aged like a fine wine; it has the concentrated flavor of a luscious ripe tomato. We use it to bolster tomato salsas and drizzle it over salads.

99 Zhejiang, on the eastern coast of China, is famous for its black rice vinegars, including **GOLD PLUM CHINKIANG VINEGAR**. Traditionally used as a dipping sauce, Gold Plum has a meaty, sweet-savory character that makes it a natural for braises and a terrific substitute for balsamic.

MICHAEL KRAUS

GREAT HOME COOKS

FEEDING THE FIREMEN

"You'll never starve at a firehouse," says **JOHN MCFARLAND**, 62, chief of the Arcata Fire Protection District in Humboldt County, California. McFarland has become an expert at adapting home-style recipes to satisfy the dozen or so firefighters who sit down to the department's communal dinners on any given night. We admire the love and care McFarland puts into his cooking, which brings his ad hoc family flocking to the table again and again. An all-time favorite is his chicken enchilada casserole, topped with a bubbling jack-and-cheddar crust and green chiles and usually served with a big tossed salad and strawberry lemonade. Another is his pineapple upside-down cake (left), a dish he learned to make from the previous chief, who was active in the department until the age of 93. McFarland's rendition of the dessert has garnered praise even from the department's old-timers. McFarland insists that there's no big secret to firehouse cooking: you just make good food, and plenty of it.

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake (SERVES 8)

- 1¾ cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. fine salt
- 1⅓ cups unsalted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. distilled white vinegar
- 3 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs
- ⅓ cup low-fat buttermilk
- 10 tbsp. dark brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. brandy
- 7 slices canned pineapple
- ½ cup stemmed maraschino cherries

① Heat oven to 350°. In a bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt; set aside. Using an electric beater, cream together 12 tbsp. butter, sugar, vinegar, and 2 tsp. vanilla until fluffy, 3–4 minutes. Add one egg at a time to butter mixture, beating for 15 seconds between each addition. Set beater speed to low and alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk in 3 batches. Scrape down sides of the bowl. Set mixer speed to medium and beat batter until smooth, about 3 minutes. Set aside.

② Melt remaining butter in a 10" nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Whisk in remaining vanilla, brown sugar, and brandy until dissolved, 1 minute. Remove skillet from heat; arrange pineapple slices across bottom of skillet. Arrange cherries evenly among the slices. Pour in cake batter. Bake until cake is golden and set, about 35 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes. Invert onto a serving plate.

BARBARA RIES

SAVEUR MENU

SAVEUR's guide to EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & PRODUCTS

Almonds Are Inspiring

Available in more forms than any other tree nut and usable in countless ways, almonds should be the inspiration behind your next dish. They have an incredible ability to work with a wide range of flavor profiles, from sweet to savory.

Roast them, grind them, sprinkle them, chop them; just make sure almonds are in. For more on the inspiring and versatile role of almonds, go to www.AlmondsInspire.com.

www.AlmondsInspire.com

East Coast Pizza Meets West Coast Charm

Connecticut restaurateur Jon Mangini brings paper-thin crusted pizza to Vista, California. From traditional pepperoni pizza to signature toppings like fried eggplant, broccoli, fresh littleneck clams, or the famed garlic mashed potato and bacon pie, URBN coal fired pies are sure to make a lasting impression. For more information, please visit: www.urbnpizza.com or call 760.724.8840.

www.urbnpizza.com

Savor Authentic San Antonio

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www.visitsanantonio.com

The SAVEUR 100 Foodie Giveaway!

In honor of the SAVEUR 100, we're clearing out our pantries for you! Every Tuesday and Friday from January 6 to February 27, 2009, log on to www.saveur.com/100contest and click on that day's prize for a chance to win fabulous items for your kitchen.

The giveaway will include products from:

Australian Lamb • Falk Copper Cookware • Fissler USA • Le Creuset of America, Inc
Muir Glen Organic Tomatoes • Mud Puddle Books • Swissmar • Stumptown Coffee
Trudeau • Zojirushi • and more!

www.saveur.com/100contest

IN THE SAVEUR

KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (6)

Fit to Be Tied

When you're preparing dishes like chicken rollatini, beef or pork braciole, or the stuffed bone-in chicken breasts shown on page 44, knowing how to handle kitchen twine can make a big difference. Securing the stuffed meat with string rather than, say, spearing it with toothpicks not only makes for a nicer-looking presentation; it also helps these mini-roasts hold their shape, promoting even cooking and keeping the ingredients inside from spilling out as you turn the meat over in the skillet to brown it. ❶ Use a knife to cut a half-inch notch into the cartilage of the stuffed breast's tapered tip. Lay a 28-inch length of kitchen twine down on your work surface in an upside-down *U* shape about two inches wide. Arrange the breast skin side up in the middle of the *U* so that the stuffed edge is facing away from you. ❷ Bring the two ends of the twine over the top of the breast and through the loop. Pull the ends tight. ❸ Pull one end of twine toward the tapered tip of the breast and the other end in the opposite direction. Pull both ends tight and flip the breast. ❹ Bring both ends of the twine up to the middle of the breast, guiding one end through the notch you've cut in the tapered tip to hold the twine in place. Cross one end over the other and pull tight, as if wrapping a package, and flip the breast again. ❺ Tie the ends of twine into a double knot to secure; trim ends with kitchen shears. You should have three evenly spaced bands running across the breast. ❻ Slip three sprigs of thyme in between the skin and the twine. —*Hunter Lewis*

KITCHEN

Four Tips to Keep

Developing and testing the assemblage of recipes gathered from home cooks all over the world for this year's special edition of the SAVEUR 100 tapped into virtually every method and trick in our arsenal. The four techniques shown here are a few of our favorites—simple acts of cooking or prepping that we return to again and again.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (4)

❶ The Swiss-made Star peeler (see page 61) also works well for making a julienne of vegetables like carrots and zucchini. With the peeler, cut the vegetable into long, wide strips. Stack the strips and, with the stack resting on its side, pinch the ends together. Run the peeler across the top of the stack to julienne. ❷ Preparing mussels for steaming (see recipe, page 76) is simple. Just scrub them under cold running water and remove their beards—the fibrous strands protruding from the shells that mussels use to attach themselves to rocks and other surfaces—with small jeweler's pliers, which provide a better grip than bare fingers do. ❸ Garlic paste is an essential component of all kinds of rubs and flavor bases (it's also crucial for the stuffed chicken breasts on page 44). Peel and crush garlic cloves with the side of a knife against a cutting board and sprinkle the garlic with a pinch of kosher salt, which acts as an abrasive and draws out moisture. Repeatedly scoop up and scrape the garlic-salt mixture against the board with the edge of the knife until a uniform paste forms. ❹ A fast, reliable way to check whether small pieces of meat (like the venison burgers on page 46) are cooked through is to insert the tip of a knife into the meat, leave it for five seconds, then gently touch the blade to your fingertip. If the knife is warm to the touch, the food is sufficiently cooked. —*H.L.*

KITCHEN

No More Tears

I'VE NEVER MET AN onion that didn't make me weep. The knife goes in, what begins as a tingling soon builds to a burn, and then, cue the waterworks. Recently I became determined to learn what lends onions their incendiary power—and how I might subdue it.

Thumbing through scientific articles, I ascertained that, until we apply the knife, an enzyme and a sulfur compound coexist peacefully in onions. Once the onion's cells are pierced, the two combine to form a volatile chemical that, when airborne, irritates the tear ducts. My research into possible antidotes yielded less conclusive results. My covering my eyes with goggles warded off a few tears, but I still felt the burn (and a little foolish besides). I went on to unearth old wives' tales about biting down on a matchstick, as well as conflicting advice regarding whether an onion should be frozen or soaked in cold water before chopping. None of my findings led to dry eyes.

Then I reached Barry G. Swanson, a food scientist at Washington State University, who seemed to talk sense. Goggles are fine, he said, but "injuring as few of the onion's cells as possible" is really the way to go. He recommended using a freshly sharpened knife, capable of penetrating the bulb quickly and cleanly. And while a stopover in the freezer or in ice water might slow the progress of tear-inducing compounds, "freezing will result in a less crisp onion, and soaking removes flavor". Better to rely on an open window, running water, or a flame to draw away and purge some of the onion's irksome fumes. "I burn a few candles," he said. I have since taken to doing the same, completing my fail-safe mise-en-place: a sharp knife and an enchanting ambience. —*Tanya Piacentini*

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THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered food products and destinations too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

BY HUNTER LEWIS

Fare

To make the perfect grilled cheese sandwich, order Fort St-Antoine **comté cheese** ($19 for ½ pound) from Zingerman's (888/636-8162; www.zingermans.com). Sidle up to one of **Louisville's bars** for an old-fashioned cocktail, a cold beer, and some of the country's best bar snacks. Try the rolled oysters and fried chicken livers at Flabby's (1101 Lydia Street; 502/637-9136; www.flabbys.com); green chile wontons at the Bristol Bar & Grille (1321 Bardstown Road; 502/456-1702; www.bristolbarandgrille.com); a hot Brown at the Brown Hotel (335 West Broadway; 502/583-1234; www.brownhotel.com); navy bean soup and fried bologna sandwiches at Check's Café (1101 East Burnett Avenue; 502/637-9515); shredded lamb and pork sandwiches at Morris' Deli (2228 Taylorsville Road; 502/458-1668); "Kentucky Tapas" at Lilly's Bistro (1147 Bardstown Road; 502/451-0447; www.lillyslapeche.com); fried calamari and bourbon-infused cocktails at Jack's Lounge (122 Sears Avenue; 502/897-9026; www.equusrestaurant.com); and bison bresaola at Proof on Main (702 West Main Street; 502/217-6360; www.proofonmain.com). To order **Mangalica pork**, contact Wooly Pigs ($25 per pound; 253/833-7591; www.woolypigs.com). For a taste of Florida, order **stone crab claws** from Joe's Stone Crab (11 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; 800/780-2722; www.joesstonecrab.com) and juicy **Florida citrus** from Lang Sun Country Groves (800/535-1199; www.langsuncountry.com). When in Florida, stop by chef Michael Schwartz's Miami restaurant **Michael's Genuine Food & Drink** (130 Northeast 40th Street, Atlas Plaza; 305/573-5550; www.michaelsgenuine.com); the **Ravenous Pig** in Winter Park (1234 North Orange Avenue; 407/628-2333; www.theravenouspig.com); and the **Perfect Caper** in Punta Gorda (121 East Marion Avenue; 941/505-9009; www.theperfectcaper.com).

THE SAVEUR 100

1. Visit **SARA JENKINS**'s pocket-size restaurant Porchetta to sample her homespun, brilliant take on Italian stuffed and roasted porchetta, white beans, and garlicky greens (110 East Seventh Street, New York, New York; 212/777-2151; www.porchettanyc.com). **2.** Visit **LIDIA BASTIANICH**'s website (www.lidiasitaly.com) for information about her books, restaurants, and recipes, as well as programming information on her television show. For our favorite sugars, order **4. INDIA TREE SPARKLING SUGAR**, available at Chef Tools ($3.99 for a 3.5-ounce jar, available in various colors; 866/716-2433; www.cheftools.com); **5. BILLINGTON'S DARK BROWN MOLASSES SUGAR**, available at iGourmet ($3.99 for a 1-pound bag; 877/446-8763; www.igourmet.com); **6. GOYA PILONCILLO**, available at Kalustyan's ($6.99 for an 8-ounce cone; 800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com); **7. FLORIDA CRYSTALS NATURAL CANE SUGAR**, available at OrganicDirect ($6.29 for a 48-ounce carton; 718/451-2828; www.organicdirect.com); and **8. C&H BAKER'S SUGAR**, available at the C&H Baker's Sugar website ($2.79 for a 4-pound box; www.bakerssugar.com). **9. LE CREUSET FRENCH OVENS**, skillets, and pots may be ordered directly from the company (877/273-8738; www.lecreuset.com/en-us; prices vary by size and style). **10.** You can sign up for **HOME COOKING CLASSES** in Japan with Elizabeth Andoh (www.tasteofculture.com) to learn how to cook traditional Japanese dishes; in Italy with Faith Willinger (www.faithwillinger.com) and Agata Amato (39/089/857-019) to learn how to cook southern Italian food; in India with Nimmy Paul (91/484/231-4293; www.nimmypaul.com) to learn how to cook Keralean and Syrian food; and in Malaysia with Rohani Jelani (www.rohanijelani.com) to learn how to cook traditional dishes from Malaysia. Visit Nach Waxman at Kitchen Arts and Letters (1435 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York; 212/876-5550; www.kitchenartsandletters.com) to peruse the shelves for our favorite cookbooks, including **11. THE CLASSIC ITALIAN COOK BOOK**. For our favorite oils, order **13. NUÑEZ DE PRADO EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**, available at Woodstock Farmer's Market ($29.69 for a 33.8-oz. bottle; 802/457-3658; www.woodstockfarmersmarket.com); **14. FRANKIES 457 EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**, available at Frankies Spuntino ($25 for 1 liter; 718/403-0033; www.frankiesspuntino.com); **15. LA TOURANGELLE ROASTED PISTACHIO OIL**, available at iGourmet.com ($29.99 for an 8.45-ounce bottle; 877/446-8763; www.igourmet.com); **16. LION & GLOBE PEANUT OIL**, available at AsianWok ($9.10 for a 33-ounce bottle; 800/300-6346; www.asianwok.com); **17. SCALIGERA GRAPESEED OIL**, available at Stephen Singer, Olio LLC ($10 for a 1-liter bottle; 510/666-8481; www.stephensingerolio.com); and **18. PARACHUTE COCONUT OIL**, available at AsiaMex ($11.50 for a 16-oz. bottle; 636/272-0604; www.asiamex.com). Visit Kitchen Arts and Letters (see above) for **19. PARISIAN HOME COOKING** and **20. AMERICAN CENTURY COOKBOOK**. **22.** To learn more about the **CUISINART FOOD PROCESSOR**, visit www.cuisinart.com. **23.** To make **HOMEMADE WINE VINEGAR**, use a 1-gallon glass crock with a spigot, available at Prettywood Tea ($49.95 for a 128-ounce jar; ask for the "San Marino"; 515/395-3535; www.prettywoodtea.com) and a white or red wine natural mother of vinegar, available at Local Harvest ($7.99 for an 8-ounce jar; ask for "Natural Vinegar Starter–Mother of Vinegar"; www.localharvest.org). **24.** You can subscribe to **JOHN THORNE**'s *Simple Cooking* newsletter in print or electronic format, read his cook's diary, and order autographed copies of his books, *Mouth Wide Open* and *Serious Pig*, at his website (www.outlawcook.com). **26.** To make stuffed **CHICKEN BREASTS**, use raclette cheese, available at Artisinal ($14.50 for a 1-pound wedge; 877/797-1200; www.artisanalcheese.com). **27.** For a taste from the world of **HOME-BASED BUSINESSES**, you can mail-order homemade tamales wrapped in corn husks from the noted Laredo, Texas–based cook Irma De Los Santos (956/722-3279). **28.** To make home cooks **JOAKIM AND NIVA DAHL'S** biff à la Lindström, use ground venison, available at O. Ottomanelli & Sons ($9.99 per pound; 212/675-4217). **29.** To make **HOMEMADE WHOLE-GRAIN MUSTARD**, order brown mustard seeds ($3.99 for a 4-ounce bag), available at Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com). Our favorite pots and pans include **30.** the 3-quart **ANOLON ULTRA CLAD SAUCEPAN**, available at Cooking.com ($79.95; ask for the "covered saucier";

800/663-8810; www.cooking.com); **31.** the 3.1-quart **MAUVIEL COPPER WINDSOR SAUCEPAN**, available at MetroKitchen ($399.95; 888/892-9911; www.metrokitchen.com); **32.** the 6-quart **FAGOR DUO PRESSURE COOKER**, available at Canning Pantry ($79.95; 800/285-9044; www.canningpantry.com); **33.** the 10-inch **T-FAL ULTIMATE FRY PAN**, available at Cooking.com ($34.95; ask for the 10-inch "nonstick sauté pan"; see above); and **34.** the 4-quart **ALL-CLAD STRAIGHT-SIDED SAUTÉ PAN**, available at Williams-Sonoma ($235; ask for the "stainless steel professional sauté pan"; 877/812-6235; www.williams-sonoma.com). **35.** Make **HARISSA** with dried guajillo chiles ($4.49 for a 4-ounce bag) and dried new mexico chiles ($4.49 for a 4-ounce bag), available at the Spice House (847/328-3711; www.thespicehouse.com). **37.** To make **HOMEMADE KETCHUP**, use anaheim chiles, available at Melissa's/World Variety Produce (price and availability vary by season; 800/588-0151; www.melissas.com). Visit Kitchen Arts and Letters (see above) for **39. THAI FOOD** and **40. THE NEW BASICS**. **41.** To make the **WHOLE ROASTED FISH**, use linguiça, available at Gaspar's ($6.75 per pound; 866/646-4266; www.gasparssausage.com). **42.** To make **HOMEMADE WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE**, use green cardamon pods ($6.99 for a 2-ounce pack), tamarind concentrate ($5.99 for an 8-ounce jar), and molasses ($13.99 for a 15-ounce bottle), all available at Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com). More information about homemade condiments can be found in Grace Firth's *Stillroom Cookery*. Our five favorite salts include **43. DIAMOND CRYSTAL** kosher salt, available at most supermarkets (prices vary for a 13-ounce canister) for everyday cooking; **44. HAKATA ROASTED SEA SALT**, available at Sunrise Mart ($3.05 for a 250-gram bag; ask for "roasted sea salt"; 212/598-3040) for raw and grilled fish and ramen soups; **45. MURRAY RIVER SALT**, available at Salt Traders ($8.75 for a 1-ounce jar; 800/641-7258; www.salttraders.com) for adding salty crunch to salads; **46. LE PALUDIER FLEUR DE SEL DE GUÉRANDE**, available at Kalustyan's ($16.99 for a 125-gram canister; 800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com) for sprinkling on everything from omelettes to pork chops; **47.** and, for a crunchy salt crust on roasts, **GRIGIO DI CERVIA** gray sea salt, available at the Meadow in Portland, Oregon ($8 for a 1.2-ounce jar; ask for "Grigio di Cervia Finishing Salt"; 3731 North Mississippi Avenue; 888/388-4633; www.atthemeadow.com). Visit Kitchen Arts and Letters (see above) for **50. RICK STEIN'S COMPLETE SEAFOOD** and **51. LA VARENNE PRATIQUE**. Our seven must-have kitchen tools include **52.** the versatile **NOGENT CLASSIC KITCHEN SPATULA**, available at J. B. Prince ($16.70; 800/473-0577; www.jbandmore.com); and **57.** the 9.5-inch **RUBBERMAID HIGH HEAT SCRAPER AND SPATULA** ($13) and **58. COMBRICHON "MAGIC SPOON" MINI WHISK** ($7.50), both available at J. B. Prince (see above). Visit Kitchen Arts and Letters (see above) for **59. THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BREADS** and **60. IN THE SWEET KITCHEN**. **62.** To make Puerto Rican **SOFRITO**, use aji dulce chiles, available at Melissa's/World Variety Produce (price and

Braised lamb shanks in a Le Creuset French oven , top left; Florida citrus from Lang Sun Country Groves, top right; Choy Sum with garlic sauce, above right; homemade rosé wine vinegar, above left.

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (2), JAMES OSELAND, ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

prince.com); **53.** the utilitarian **R. H. FORSCHNER BY VICTORINOX CHEF'S KNIFE**, available at Swiss Knife Shop ($52; 866/438-7947; www.swissknifeshop.com); **54.** the all-purpose **ZENA STAR ECONOMY PEELER**, available at Simply Good Stuff ($6.95; 800/724-6693; www.simplygoodstuff.com); **55.** the muscular **WÜSTHOF KITCHEN SHEARS**, available at Cooking.com ($19.95; 800/663-8810; www.cooking.com); **56.** the **BÖRNER THIN JULIENNE CUTTER**, available at Cutlery and More ($18; 800/650-9866; www.cutlery

availability vary by season; 800/588-0151; www.melissas.com). **63.** To make **HOMEMADE HOT SAUCE**, use red fresno chiles ($16.50 per pound) or holland chiles (price and availability vary by season), both available at Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151; www.melissas.com). **64.** Visit Michel Nischan's and the late **PAUL NEWMAN'S** locally sourced, seasonal restaurant, the Dressing Room, in Westport, Connecticut (27 Powers Court; 203/226-1114; www.dressingroomhomegrown.com). Our

favorite pots and pans include **66.** the 12-inch **LODGE LOGIC CAST IRON SKILLET**, available at Lodge Cast Iron ($29.95; 423/837-7181; www.lodgemfg.com), for searing steaks, chicken, and salmon; **67.** the **LINCOLN FOODSERVICE HEAVY-DUTY SHEET PAN**, available at Superior Products ($15.99 for a 12⅞-by-17¾-inch pan; 800/328-9800; www.superprod.com), a kitchen workhorse; **68.** the 12-quart **CARLISLE DURAWARE STOCKPOT**, available at Restaurant Source ($42; 800/460-8402; www.restaurantsource.com) for chicken stock or long-simmering brown stock; **69.** The 9-by-13-inch **ANCHOR HOCKING GLASS BAKING DISH** ($6.79; ask for the "3-quart baking dish") from Hometown Hardware (260/748-7175; www.doitbest.com) for everyday baking; and **70.** the 14-inch carbon-steel flat-bottomed **PRECISION WOK**, available at the Wok Shop ($19.95; 888/780-7171; www.wokshop.com), for stir-frying. **71.** You can go to www.webernation.com for interactive recipes, online grilling classes, and grilling tips for your **WEBER KETTLE GRILL**. Visit our favorite independent supermarkets, including **73. BERKELEY BOWL** in Berkeley, California (2020 Oregon Street; 510/843-6929; www.berkeleybowl.com); **74. BRIGHTON BAZAAR** in Brooklyn, New York (1007 Brighton Beach Avenue; 718/769-1700); **75. JUNGLE JIM'S INTERNATIONAL MARKET** in Fairfield, Ohio (5440 Dixie Highway; 513/674-6000; www.junglejims.com); **76.** the newest **MI PUEBLO** in San Jose, California (320 North Capitol Avenue; 408/240-0590; www.mipueblofoods.com); **77. MT SUPERMARKET** in Austin, Texas (10901 North Lamar Boulevard, Building G; 512/454-4804; www.mtsupermarket.com); **78. PHOENICIA SPECIALTY FOODS** in Houston, Texas (12141 Westheimer Road; 281/558-8225; www.phoeniciafoods.com); **79. POMEGRANATE** in Brooklyn, New York (1507 Coney Island Avenue; 718/951-7112; www.thepompeople.com), one of the nation's largest kosher groceries; **80. SEDANO'S** in Miami, Florida (www.sedanos.com); **81.** the 55,000-square-foot flagship **UWAJIMAYA** in Seattle, Washington (600 Fifth Avenue South; 206/624-6248; www.uwajimaya.com); **82.** and **THE WEDGE** in Minneapolis, Minnesota (2105 Lyndale Avenue South; 612/871-3993; www.wedge.coop). **85.** To make your own **THAI RED CURRY PASTE**, use chiles de árbol ($5.99 for a .75-ounce pack) and fish sauce ($8.99 for a 7-ounce bottle; ask for "Cock" brand), available at Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com) and fresh lemongrass ($3.99 for 3 stalks), available at Grocery Thai (562/309-1112; www.grocerythai.com). **86.** Home cook **SAMUEL LLOYD KINSEY** makes his spaghetti with red fresno chiles ($16.50 per pound), available at Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151; www.melissas.com), and mullet bottarga ($69.50 per pound), which is available at Buon Italia (212/633-9090; www.buonitalia.com). **87.** The most essential items for **COOKING WITH WINE, BEER, AND SPIRITS** include Domaine de la Pepiere 2005 Muscadet ($14 for a 750-ml bottle), available at Hudson Wine Merchants (www.hudsonwinemerchants.com); Charles Shaw Blend Merlot (prices vary) from Trader Joe's (for store locations, go to www.traderjoes.com); Anchor Porter (www.anchorbrewing.com); Bodegas Dios Baco amontillado sherry ($19.99 for a 750-ml bottle) from Blanchard's Wines and Spirits (www.blanchardsliquor.com), and Ricard Pernod ($23 for a 750-ml bottle), available at most liquor stores. **88.** To make home cook **MEI TECK WONG**'s Asian greens with garlic, use yau choy sum (price and availability vary by season), available at Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151; www.melissas.com) and Pearl River Bridge superior light soy sauce ($5.99 for a 16.9-ounce bottle), available at Pacific Rim Gourmet (www.pacificrimgourmet.com). Visit Kitchen Arts and Letters (see above) for **89. VEGETABLES FROM AMARANTH TO ZUCCHINI**. **90.** Order confit duck legs ($7.99 for a 5-ounce leg) and rendered duck fat ($3.99 for a 7-ounce container), available at D'Artagnan (800/327-8246; www.dartagnan.com) to make **CASSOULET**. **91.** Hone **BARTENDER'S TECHNIQUES** with the tools of the trade, including a Boston Cocktail Shaker ($50; ask for a "Rösle") from Sur La Table (800/243-0852; www.surlatable.com); a bar spoon ($3.75 for an 11-inch spoon) from KegWorks (877/636-3673; www.kegworks.com); a wooden mallet ($9.95 for a 4 ½-inch mallet) from Grizzly Industrial (800/523-4777; www.grizzlyindustrial.com); a canvas coin bag ($20.99 for a case of ten 12-by-19-inch bags) from Bank Supplies (800/968-7868; www.banksupplies.com). **92.** Make a tart of caramelized **ONIONS** with 9-by-11-inch frozen sheets of puff pastry from Dufour Pastry Kitchen (available in specialty stores and at Whole Foods markets; call to find a distributor; 800/439-1282; www.dufourpastrykitchens.com). Our favorite vinegars include **94. SARSON'S MALT VINEGAR** ($3.25 for a 300-ml bottle), available at British Delights (978/392-0077; www.britishdelights.com); **95. TRADITIONAL ACETO BALSAMICO OF MONTICELLO** ($150 for a 4.5-ounce bottle), available at the Darland Company (www.organicbalsamic.com); **96. VERGER PIERRE GINGRAS NATURAL HANDCRAFTED CIDER VINEGAR** ($16 for a 500-ml bottle), available at Zingerman's (888/636-8162; www.zingermans.com); **97. DATU PUTI COCONUT VINEGAR** ($1.45 for a 750-ml bottle), available at Filipino Store (515/285-3894; www.filipino-store.com); **98. GEGENBAUER TOMATO VINEGAR** ($33 for a 250-ml bottle), available at Cube Market Place (323/939-1148; www.cubemarketplace.com); and **99.** black rice **GOLD PLUM CHINKIANG VINEGAR** ($4.59 for a 21-ounce bottle), available at Ethnic Foods (866/416-4165; www.ethnicfoods.com).

Items marked with Ⓟ also appear, with photographs, in our Visual Pantry at www.saveur.com/visualpantry117.

Correction

In our November 2008 issue, the contact information for the **Belmont Tavern** should have read: 12 Bloomfield Avenue, Belleville, New Jersey; 973/759-9609. In our December 2008 issue, the **beef tenderloin** supplied by New Jersey–based supplier D'Artagnan is pasture-raised and grain-finished.

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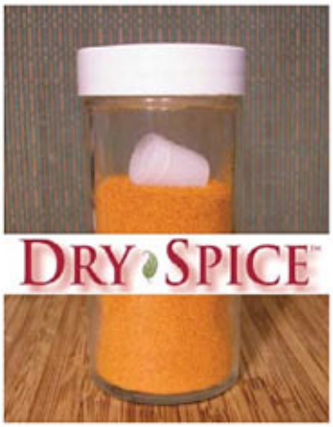

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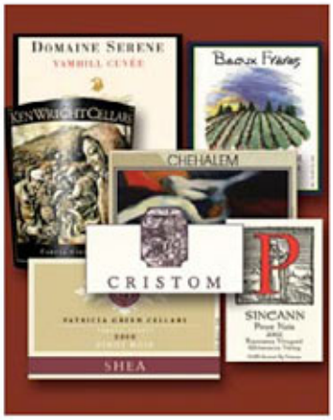

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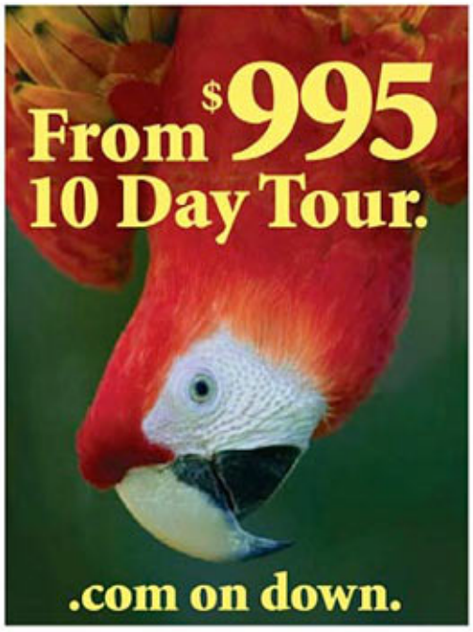

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